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OR,

THE HISTORY OF MR. BRAGWELL.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

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THE

TWO WEALTHY FARMERS.

MR. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy happened to meet last year at Weyhill fair. They were glad to see each other as they had but seldom met of late; Mr. Bragwell having removed some years before from Mr. Worthy's neighbourhood, to a distant village where he had bought an estate.

Mr. Bragwell was a substantial farmer and grazier. He had risen in the world by what worldly men call a run of good fortune. He had also been a man of great industry; that is, he had paid a diligent and constant attention to his own interest: He understood business, and had a knack of turning almost every thing to his own interest. He had that sort of sense, which good men call cunning, and knaves call wisdom. He was too prudent ever to do any thing so wrong that the law could take hold of him; yet he was not over scrupulous about the morality of an action, when the prospect of enriching himself by it was very great, and the chance of hurting his character was small. The corn he sent home to his customers was not always quite so good as the samples he had produced at market, and he now and then forgot to name some capital blemish in the horses he sold at fair. He scorned to be guilty of the petty frauds of cheating in weights and measures, for he thought that was a beggarly sin; but he valued himself on his skill in making a bargain, and fancied it showed his knowledge of the world to take advantage of the ignorance of a dealer.

It was his constant rule to undervalue every thing he was about to buy, and to overvalue every thing he was about to sell; but as he prided himself on his character he avoided

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every thing that was very shameful, so that he was considered merely as a hard dealer, and a keen hand at a bargain. Now and then, when he had been caught in pushing his own advantage too far, he contrived to get out of the scrape by turning the whole into a jest, saying it was a good take in, a rare joke, and that he had only a mind to divert himself with the folly of his neighbour who could be so easily imposed on.

Mr. Bragwell had one favourite maxim, namely, that a man's success in life was a sure proof of his wisdom; and that all failure and misfortune was the consequence of a man's own folly. As this opinion was first taken up by him from vanity and ignorance; so it was more and more confirmed by his own prosperity. He saw that he himself had succeeded greatly without either money or education to begin with, and he therefore now despised every man, however excellent his character or talents might be, who had not had the same success in life. His natural disposition was not particularly bad, but prosperity had hardened his heart. He made his own progress in life the rule by which the conduct of all other men was to be judged, without any allowance for their peculiar disadvantages, or the visitations of Providence. He thought, for his part, that every man of sense could command success on his undertakings, and controul and dispose the events of his own life.

But though he considered those who had had less success than himself, as no better than fools, yet he did not extend this opinion to Mr. Worthy, whom he looked upon not only as a good but wise man. They had been bred up when children in the same house, but with this difference, that Worthy was the nephew of the master, and Bragwell the son of the servant.

Bragwell's father had been ploughman in the family of Mr. Worthy's uncle, a sensible man, who farmed a small estate of his own, and who having no children, bred up young Worthy as his son, instructed him in the business of husbandry, and at his death left him his estate. The father of Worthy was a pious clergyman who lived with his brother the farmer, in order to help out a narrow income. He had bestowed much pains on the instruction of his son, and used frequently to repeat to him a saying which he had picked up in a book written by one of the greatest men in this country—that there

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were two things with which every man ought to be acquainted, RELIGION AND HIS OWN BUSINESS. While he therefore took care that his son should be made an excellent farmer, he filled up his leisure hours in improving his mind; so that young Worthy had read more books and understood them better than most men in his station. His reading, however, had been chiefly confined to husbandry and divinity, the two subjects which were of the most immediate importance to him.

The reader will see by this time that Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy were likely to be as opposite to each other as two men could well be, who were nearly of the same age and condition, and who were neither of them without credit in the world. Bragwell indeed made far the greater figure, for he liked to *cut a dash*, as he called it. And while it was the study of Worthy to conform to his station, and to set a good example to those about him, it was the delight of Bragwell to vie in his way of life with men of larger fortune. He did not see how much this vanity raised the envy of his inferiors, the ill-will of his equals, and the contempt of his betters.

His wife was a notable stirring woman, but vain, violent, and ambitious; very ignorant, and very high-minded. She had married Bragwell before he was worth a shilling, and as she had brought him a good deal of money, she thought herself the grand cause of his rising in the world, and thence took occasion to govern him most completely. Whenever he ventured to oppose her she took care to put him in mind that he owed every thing to her, that had it not been for her he might still have been stumping after a plough-tail, or setying hogs in old Worthy's farm-yard, but that it was she who had made a gentleman of him. In order to set about making him a gentleman she had begun by teazing him till he had turned away all his poor relations who worked in the farm. She next drew him off from keeping company with his old acquaintance, and at last persuaded him to remove from the place where he had got his money. Poor woman! she had not sense and virtue enough to see how honourable it is for a man to raise himself in the world by fair means, and then to help forward his poor relations and friends; engaging their services by his kindness, and endeavouring to keep want out of the family.

Mrs. Bragwell was an excellent mistress, according to her own notions of excellence, for no one could say that she ever lost an opportunity of scolding a servant, or was ever guilty of the weakness of overlooking a fault. Towards her two daughters her behaviour was far otherwise. In them she could see nothing but perfections; but her extravagant fondness for these girls was full as much owing to pride as to affection. She was bent on making a family, and having found out that she was too ignorant, and too much trained to the habits of getting money, ever to hope to make a figure herself, she looked to her daughters as the persons who were to raise the family of Bragwells; and in this hope she foolishly submitted to any drudgery for their sakes, and bore every kind of impertinence from them.

The first wish of her heart was to set them above their neighbours: for she used to say, what was the use of having substance, if her daughters might not carry themselves above girls who had nothing? To do her justice, she herself would be about early and late to see that the business of the house was not neglected. She had been bred to great industry, and continued to work when it was no longer necessary, both from early habit, and the desire of heaping up money for her daughters. Yet her whole notion of gentility was, that it consisted in being rich and idle; and though she was willing to be a drudge herself, she resolved to make her daughters gentlewomen on this principle. To be well dressed and to do nothing, or nothing which is of any use, was what she fancied distinguished people in genteel life. And this is too common a notion of a fine education among some people. They do not esteem things by their use, but by their shew. They estimate the value of their children's education by the money it costs, and not by the knowledge and goodness it bestows. People of this stamp often take a pride in the expence of learning, instead of taking pleasure in the advantages of it. And the silly vanity of letting others see that they can afford any thing, often sets parents on letting their daughters learn not only things of no use, but things which may be really hurtful in their situation; either by setting them above their proper duties, or by taking up their time in a way inconsistent with them.

Mrs. Bragwell sent her daughters to a boarding school, where she instructed them to hold up their heads as high as any body; to have more spirit than *to be put upon* by any one; never to be pitiful about money, but rather to shew that they could spend with the best; to keep company with the richest girls in the school, and to make no acquaintance with farmers daughters.

They came home at the usual age of leaving school, with a large portion of vanity grafted on their native ignorance. The vanity was added, but the ignorance was not taken away. Of religion they could not possibly learn any thing, since none was taught, for at that place it was considered as a part of education which belonged only to charity schools. Of knowledge they had got just enough to laugh at their fond parents' rustic manners and vulgar language, and just enough taste to despise and ridicule every girl who was not as vainly dressed as themselves.

The mother had been comforting herself for the heavy expence of their bringing up, by the looking forward to the pleasure of seeing them become fine ladies, and to the pride of marrying them above their station.

Their father hoped also that they would be a comfort to him both in sickness and in health. He had had no learning himself, and could write but poorly, and owed what skill he had in figures to his natural turn for business. He hoped that his daughters, after all the money he had spent on them, would now write his letters and keep his accounts. And as he was now and then laid up with a fit of the gout, he was enjoying the prospect of having two affectionate children to nurse him.

When they came home, however, he had the mortification to find, that though he had two smart showy ladies to visit him, he had neither dutiful daughters to nurse him, nor faithful stewards to keep his books, nor prudent children to manage his house. They neither soothed him by kindness when he was sick, nor helped him when he was busy. They thought the maid might take care of him in the gout as she did before. And as to their skill in cyphering he soon found, to his cost, that though they knew how to *spend* both pounds, shillings, and pence, yet they did not know so well how to cast them up.

Mrs. Bragwell one day being very busy in preparing a great dinner for the neighbours, ventured to request her daughters to assist in making the pastry. They asked her scornfully, whether she had sent them to boarding school to learn to cook; and added, that they supposed she would expect them next to make puddings for the hay-makers. So saying they coolly marched off to their music. When the mother found her girls were too polite to be of any use, she would take comfort in observing how her parlour was set out with their filligree and flowers, their embroidery and cut paper. They spent the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the spinnet, and the night in reading novels.

With all these fine qualifications it is easy to suppose, that as they despised their sober duties, they no less despised their plain neighbours. When they could not get to a horse race, a petty ball, or a strolling play, with some company as idle and as smart as themselves, they were driven for amusement to the circulating-library. Jack, the plough-boy, on whom they had now put a livery jacket, was employed half his time in trotting backwards and forwards with the most wretched trash the little neighbouring book shop could furnish. The choice was often left to Jack, who could not read, but who had general orders to bring all the new new things and a great many of them.

Things were in this state, or rather growing worse, for idleness and vanity are never at a stand; when these two wealthy farmers, Bragwell and Worthy, met at Weyhill fair, as was said before. After many hearty salutations had passed between them, it was agreed that Mr. Bragwell should spend the next day with his old friend, whose house was not many miles distant. Bragwell invited himself in the following manner:—We have not had a comfortable day's chat for years, said he, and as I am to look at a drove of lean beasts in your neighbourhood, I will take a bed at your house, and we will pass the evening in debating as we used to do. You know I always loved a bit of an argument, and am reckoned not to make the worst figure at our club: I had not, to be sure, such good learning as you had, because your father was a parson, and you got it for nothing; but I can bear my part pretty well for all that. When any man talks to me about his learning, I ask if it has helped him to get a good estate;

if he says no, then I would not give him a rush for it: for of what use is all the learning in the world if it does not make a man rich? But as I was saying, I will come and see you to-morrow; but now don't let your wife put herself into a fuss for me. Don't alter your own plain way, for I am not proud I assure you, nor above my old friends, though I thank God I am pretty well in the world.

To all this flourishing speech Mr. Worthy coolly answered, that certainly worldly prosperity ought never to make any man proud, since it is God who giveth strength to get riches, and without his blessing, *'tis in vain to rise up early and to eat the bread of carefulness.*

About the middle of the next day Mr. Bragwell reached Mr. Worthy's neat and pleasant dwelling. He found every thing in it the reverse of his own. It had not so many ornaments, but it had more comforts. And when he saw his friend's good old fashioned arm chair in a warm corner, he gave a sigh to think how his own had been banished to make room for his daughters' piano forte. Instead of made flowers in glass cases, and a tea chest and screen too fine to be used, which he saw at home, and about which he was cautioned, and scolded as often as he came near them, he saw a neat shelf of good books for the service of the family, and a small medicine chest for the benefit of the poor.

Mrs. Worthy and her daughters had prepared a plain but neat and good dinner. The tarts were so excellent that Bragwell felt a secret kind of regret that his own daughters were too genteel to do any thing so very useful. Indeed he had been always unwilling to believe that any thing which was very proper and very necessary, could be so extremely vulgar and unbecoming as his daughters were always declaring it to be. And his late experience of the little comfort he found at home, inclined him now still more strongly to suspect that things were not so right as he had been made to suppose. But it was in vain to speak; for his daughters constantly stopped his mouth by a favourite saying of theirs—"better be out of the world than out of the fashion."

Soon after dinner the women went out to their several employments, and Mr. Worthy being left alone with his guest the following discourse took place.

Bragwell. You have a couple of sober pretty looking girls, Worthy; but I wonder they don't tiff off a little more. Why my girls have as much fat and flour on their heads as would half maintain my reapers in suet pudding.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, in the management of my family, I don't consider what I might afford only, though that is one great point; but I consider also what is needful and becoming in a man of my station, for there are so many useful ways of laying out money, that I feel as if it were a sin to spend one unnecessary shilling. Having had the blessing of a good education myself, I have been able to give the like advantage to my daughters. One of the best lessons I have taught them is, to know themselves; and one proof that they have learnt this lesson is, that they are not above any of the duties of their station. They read and write well, and when my eyes are bad, they keep my accounts in a very pretty manner. If I had put them to learn what you call *genteel things*, these might either have been of no use to them, and so both time and money might have been thrown away; or they might have proved worse than nothing to them by leading them into wrong notions, and wrong company. Though we don't wish them to do the laborious parts of the dairy work; yet they always assist their mother in the management of it. As to their appearance, they are every day nearly as you see them now, and on Sundays they are very neatly dressed, but it is always in a decent and modest way. There are no lappets, fringes, furbelows, and tawdry ornaments, fluttering about among my cheese and butter. And I should feel no vanity but much mortification if a stranger seeing farmer Worthy's daughters at church, should ask who those fine ladies were.

Bragwell. Now I own I should like to have such a question asked concerning my daughters. I like to make people stare and envy. It makes one feel one-self somebody. But as to yourself, to be sure you best know what you can afford. And indeed there is some difference between your daughters and the Miss Bragwells.

Worthy. For my part, before I engage in any expence, I always ask myself these two short questions, First, Can I afford it?—Secondly, Is it proper for me?

Bragwell. Do you so? Now I own I ask myself but one. For if I find I can afford it, I take care to make it proper for me. If I can pay for a thing, no one has a right to hinder me from having it.

Worthy. Certainly. But a man's own prudence and sense of duty, ought to prevent him from doing an improper thing, as effectually as if there were somebody to hinder them.

Bragwell. Now I think a man is a fool who is hindered from having any thing he has a mind to; unless, indeed, he is in want of money to pay for it; I'm no friend to debt. A poor man must want on.

Worthy. But I hope my children have learnt not to want any thing which is not proper for them. They are very industrious, they attend to business all day; and in the evening they sit down to their work and a good book. I think they live in the fear of God. I trust they are humble and pious, and I am sure they seem cheerful and happy. If I am sick, it is pleasant to see them dispute which shall wait upon me, for they say the maid cannot do it so tenderly as themselves.——

This part of the discourse staggered Bragwell. Vain as he was, he could not help feeling what a difference a religious and a worldly education made on the heart, and how much the former regulated even the natural temper. Another thing which surprised him was, that these girls living a life of domestic piety, without any public diversions, should be so very cheerful and happy; while his own daughters who were never contradicted, and were indulged with continual amusements, were always sullen and ill-tempered. That they who are more humoured should be less grateful and less happy, disturbed him much. He envied Worthy the tenderness of his children, though he would not own it, but turned it off thus.

Bragwell. But my girls are too smart to make mopes of, that is the truth. Though ours is such a lonely village, 'tis wonderful to see how soon they get the fashions. What with the descriptions in the magazines, and the pictures in the pocket books, they have them in a twinkling, and out-do their patterns all to nothing. I used to take in the county journal, because it was useful enough to see how oats went, the time of high water, and the price of stocks. But when my ladies came home, forsooth, I was soon wheedled out of

that, and forced to take a London paper, that tells a deal about caps and feathers, and all the trumpery of the quality. When I want to know what hops are a bag, they are snatching the paper to see what violet soap is a pound. And as to the dairy, they never care how cow's milk goes, as long as they can get some stuff which they call milk of roses.

Worthy. But do your daughters never read?

Bragwell. Read! I believe they do too. Why our Jack, the plough-boy, spends half his time in going to a shop in our market-town, where they let out books to read with marble covers. And they sell paper with all manner of colours on the edges, and gim-cracks, and powder-puffs, and wash-balls, and cards without any pips, and every thing in the world that's genteel and of no use. 'Twas but t'other day I met Jack with a basket full of these books, so having some time to spare, I sat down to see a little what they were about.

Worthy. Well, I hope you there found what was likely to improve your daughters, and teach them the true use of time.

Bragwell. O as to that, you are pretty much out. I could make neither head nor tail of it. It was neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring. It was all about my Lord, and Sir Harry, and the Captain. But I never met with such nonsensical fellows in my life. Their talk was no more like that of my old landlord, who was a Lord you know, nor the Captain of our fencibles, than chalk is like cheese. I was fairly taken in at first, and began to think I had got hold of a *godly* book, for there was a deal about hope and despair, and heaven, and angels, and torments, and everlasting happiness. But when I got a little on, I found there was no meaning in all these words, or, if any, 'twas a bad meaning. Misery, perhaps, only meant a disappointment about a bit of a letter: and everlasting happiness meant two people talking nonsense together for five minutes. In short, I never met with such a pack of lies. The people talk such gibberish as no folks in their sober senses ever did talk; and the things that happen to them are not like the things that ever happen to any of my acquaintance. They are at home one minute, and beyond sea the next. Beggars to-day, and Lords to-morrow. Waiting maids in the morning, and Duchesses at night. You and I, Master Worthy, have worked hard many years, and think it very well to have scraped a trifle of money together, you

a few hundreds, I suppose, and I a few thousands. But one would think every man in these books had the Bank of England in his scrutoire. Then there's another thing which I never met with in true life. We think it pretty well, you know, if one has got one thing, and another has got another. I'll tell you how I mean. You are reckoned sensible, our parson is learned, the squire is rich, I am rather generous, one of your daughters is pretty, and both mine are genteel. But in these books, (except here and there one, whom they make worse than Satan himself) every man and woman's child of them, are all wise, and witty, and generous, and rich, and handsome, and genteel; and all to the last degree. Nobody is middling, or good in one thing, and bad in another, like my live acquaintance; but 'tis all up to the skies or down to the dirt. I had rather read Tom Hickathrift, or Jack the Giant Killer, a thousand times.

Worthy. You have found out, Mr. Bragwell, that many of these books are ridiculous; I will go further, and say, that to me they appear wicked also. And I should account the reading of them a great mischief, especially to people in middling and low life, if I only took into the account the great loss of time such reading causes, and the aversion it leaves behind for what is more serious and solid. But this, though a bad part, is not the worst. These books give false views of human life. They teach a contempt for humble and domestic duties; for industry, frugality, and retirement. Want of youth and beauty, is considered in them as ridiculous. Plain people, like you and me, are objects of contempt. Parental authority is set at nought. Nay, plots and contrivances against parents and guardians, fill half the volumes. They consider love as the great business of human life, and even teach that it is impossible to be regulated or restrained, and to the indulgence of this passion every duty is therefore sacrificed. A country life, with a kind mother, or a sober aunt, is described as a state of intolerable misery. And one would be apt to fancy, from their painting, that a good country house is a prison, and a worthy father the gaoler. Vice is set off with every ornament which can make it pleasing and amiable; while virtue and piety are made ridiculous by tacking to them something that is silly or absurd. Crimes, which would be considered as hanging matter at the Old Bailey, are

here made to take the appearance of virtue, by being mixed with some wild flight of unnatural generosity. These crying sins, ADULTERY, GAMING, DUELS, and SELF-MURDER, are made so familiar, and the wickedness of them is so disguised, that even innocent girls get to lose their abhorrence, and to talk with complacency of *things which should not be so much as named by them.*

I should not have said so much on this mischief (continued Mr. Worthy) from which I dare say, great folks fancy people in our station are safe enough, if I did not know, and lament that this corrupt reading is now got down even among some of the lowest class. And it is an evil which is spreading every day. Poor industrious girls, who get their bread by the needle, or the loom, spend half the night in listening to these books. Thus the labour of one girl is lost, and the minds of the rest are corrupted; for though their hands are employed in honest industry, which might help to preserve them from a life of sin, yet their hearts are at that very time polluted by scenes and descriptions which are too likely to plunge them into it. And I think I don't go too far, when I say, that the vain and shewy manner in which young women who have to work for their bread, have taken to dress themselves, added to the poison they draw from these books, contribute together to bring them to destruction, more than almost any other cause. Now tell me, don't you think these vile books will hurt your daughters?

Bragwell. Why I do think they are grown full of schemes and contrivances and whispers, that's the truth on't. Every thing is a secret. They always seem to be on the look-out for something, and when nothing comes on't, then they are sulky and disappointed. They will not keep company with their equals. They despise trade and farming, and I own, *I'm for the stuff.* I should not like for them to marry any, but a man of substance, if he was ever so smart. Now they will hardly sit down with a substantial country dealer. But if they hear of a recruiting party in our market town, on goes the finery—off they are. Some flimsy excuse is patched up. They want something at the book shop, or the milliner's, because, I suppose, there is a chance that some Jack-a-napes of an ensign may be there buying sticking-plaister. In short, I do grow a little uneasy, for I should not like to see all I have saved thrown away on a knapsack.

So saying, they both rose, and walked out to view the farm. Mr. Bragwell affected greatly to admire the good order of every thing he saw; but never forgot to compare it with something larger and handsomer or better of his own. It was easy to see that *self* was his standard of perfection in every thing. All he possessed gained some increased value in his eyes from being his; and in surveying the property of his friend, he derived food for his vanity, from things which seemed least likely to raise it. Every appearance of comfort, of success, of merit, in any thing which belonged to Mr. Worthy, led him to speak of some superior advantage of his own, of the same kind. And it was clear that the chief part of the satisfaction he felt in walking over the farm of his friend, was caused by thinking how much larger his own was.

Mr. Worthy who felt a kindness for him, which all his vanity could not cure, was on the watch how to turn their talk to some useful point. And whenever people resolve to go into company with this view, it is commonly their own fault if some opportunity of turning it to account does not offer.

He saw Bragwell was intoxicated with pride, and undone by prosperity, and that his family was in the high-road to ruin. He thought that if some means could be found to open his eyes on his own character, to which he was now totally blind, it might be of the utmost service to him. The more Mr. Worthy reflected, the more he wished to undertake this kind office. He was not sure that Mr. Bragwell would bear it, but he was very sure it was his duty to attempt it. Mr. Worthy was very humble, and very candid, and he had great patience and forbearance with the faults of others. He felt no pride at having escaped the same errors himself, for he knew who it was had *made them to differ*. He remembered that God had given him many advantages, a pious father, and a religious education; this made him humble under a sense of his own sins, and charitable towards the sins of others who had not the same privileges.

Just as he was going to try to enter into a very serious conversation with his guest, he was stopped by the appearance of his daughter, who told them supper was ready.—This interruption obliges me to break of also, and I shall reserve what follows for the Second Part of this History.

PART II.

MY readers may remember that the first part of this history concluded with a walk taken by Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy over the grounds of the latter, in which walk Mr. Bragwell, though he seemed to admire, took care to lower every thing he saw, by comparing it with something better which he had of his own. Soon after supper Mrs. Worthy left the room with her daughters, at her husband's desire; for it was his intention to speak more plainly to Bragwell than was likely to be agreeable to him to hear before others.

The two farmers being seated at their little table, each in a handsome old-fashioned great chair, Bragwell began.

It is a great comfort, neighbour Worthy, at a certain time of life, to be got above the world; my notion is, that a man should labour hard the first part of his days, and that he may then sit down and enjoy himself the remainder. Now though I hate boasting, yet as you are my oldest friend I am about to open my heart to you. Let me tell you then I reckon I have worked as hard as any man in my time, and that I now begin to think I have a right to indulge a little. I have got my money with a good character, and I mean to spend it with credit. I pay every one his own, I set a good example, I keep to my church, I serve God, I honour the king, and I obey the laws of the land.

This is doing a great deal indeed, replied Mr. Worthy; but, added he, I doubt that more goes to the making up all these duties than men are commonly aware of. Suppose then that you and I talk the matter over coolly, we have the evening before us. What if we sit down together, as two friends, and examine one another.

Bragwell, who loved argument, and who was not a little vain both of his sense and his morality, accepted the challenge; and gave his word that he would take in good part any thing that should be said to him. Worthy was about to proceed when Bragwell interrupted him for a moment, by saying,—But stop, friend, before we begin I wish you would remember that we have had a long walk, and I want a little refreshment;

have you no liquor that is stronger than this cyder? I am afraid it will give me a fit of the gout.

Mr. Worthy immediately produced a bottle of wine, and another of spirits, saying, though he drank neither spirits nor even wine himself, yet his wife always kept a little of each as a provision in case of sickness or accidents.

Farmer Bragwell preferred the brandy, and began to taste it. Why, said he, this is no better than English, I always use foreign myself.—I bought this for foreign, said Mr. Worthy.—No, no, it is English spirits, I assure you, but I can put you into a way to get foreign nearly as cheap as English. Mr. Worthy replied that he thought that was impossible.

Bragwell. O no, there are ways and means—a word to the wise—there is an acquaintance of mine that lives upon the south coast—you are a particular friend, and I will get you a gallon for a trifle.

Worthy. Not if it be smuggled, Mr. Bragwell, though I should get it for six-pence a bottle.—Ask no questions, said the other, I never say any thing to any one, and who is the wiser?—And so this is your way of obeying the laws of the land, said Mr. Worthy,—here is a fine specimen of your morality.

Bragwell. Come, come, don't make a fuss about trifles. If *every one* did it indeed it would be another thing, but as to *my* getting a drop of good brandy cheap, why that can't hurt the revenue much.

Worthy. Pray, Mr. Bragwell, what should you think of a man who would dip his hand into a bag and take out a few guineas?

Bragwell. Think! why I think that he should be hanged to be sure.

Worthy. But suppose that bag stood in the king's treasury?

Bragwell. In the king's treasury! worse and worse! What rob the king's treasury! Well, I hope the robber will be taken up and executed, for I suppose we shall all be taxed to pay the damage.

Worthy. Very true. If one man takes money out of the treasury, others must be obliged to pay the more into it; but what think you if the fellow should be found to have stopped

some money *in its way* to the treasury, instead of taking it out of the bag after it got there?

Bragwell. Guilty, Mr. Worthy; it is all the same in my opinion. If I was a juryman, I should say, guilty, death.

Worthy. Hark ye, Mr. Bragwell, he that deals in smuggled brandy, is the man who takes to himself the king's money in it's way to the treasury, and he as much robs the government as if he dipt his hands into a bag of guineas in the treasury chamber. It comes to the same thing exactly.—Here Bragwell seemed a little offended.—What! Mr. Worthy, do you pretend to say I am not an honest man because I like to get my brandy as cheap as I can? and because I like to save a shilling to my family? Sir, I repeat it, I do my duty to God and my neighbour. I say the Lord's Prayer most days, I go to church on Sundays, I repeat my creed, and keep the ten commandments, and though I may now and then get a little brandy cheap, yet upon the whole, I will venture to say, I do as much as can be expected of any man.

Worthy. Come then, since you say you keep the commandments you cannot be offended if I ask you whether you understand them.

Bragwell. To be sure I do. I dare say I do: look'ee Mr. Worthy, I don't pretend to much reading, I was not bred to it as you were. If my father had been a parson, I fancy I should have made as good a figure as some other folks, but I hope good sense and a *good heart* may teach a man his duty without much scholarship.

Worthy. To come to the point let us now go through the ten commandments, and let us take along with us those explanations of them which our Saviour gave us in his sermon on the mount.

Bragwell. Sermon on the mount! why the ten commandments are in the 20th chapter of Exodus. Come, come, Mr. Worthy, I know where to find the commandments as well as you do, for it happens that I am church-warden, and I can see from the altar piece where the ten commandments are without your telling me, for my pew directly faces it.

Worthy. But I advise you to read the sermon on the mount, that you may see the full meaning of them.

Bragwell. What do you want to make me believe that there are two ways of keeping the commandments?

Worthy. No; but there may be two ways of understanding them.

Bragwell. Well; I am not afraid to be put to the proof; I defy any man to say I do not keep at least all the four first that are on the left side of the altar-piece.

Worthy. If you can prove that, I shall be more ready to believe you observe those of the other table; for he who does his duty to God, will be likely to do his duty to his neighbour also.

Bragwell. What! do you think that I serve two Gods? Do you think then that I make graven images, and worship stock or stones? Do you take me for a papist or an idolator?

Worthy. Don't triumph quite so soon, Master Bragwell. Pray is there nothing in the world you prefer to God, and thus make an idol of? Do you not love your money, or your lands, or your crops, or your cattle, or your own will, and your own way, rather better than you love God? Do you never think of these with more pleasure than you think of Him, and follow them more eagerly than your religious duty?

Bragwell. O there's nothing about that in the 20th chapter of Exodus.

Worthy. But Jesus Christ has said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Now it is certainly a man's duty to love his father and mother, nay it would be wicked not to love them, and yet we must not love even these more than our Creator and our Saviour. Well I think on this principle, your heart pleads guilty to the breach of the first and second commandments, let us proceed to the third.

Bragwell. That is about swearing, is it not?

Mr. Worthy, who had observed Bragwell guilty of much profaneness in using the name of his Maker, (though all such offensive words have been avoided in writing this history) now told him that he had been waiting the whole day for an opportunity to reprove him for his frequent breach of the third commandment.

Good L—d I break the third commandment, said Bragwell, no indeed hardly ever. I once used to swear a little to be sure, but I vow to G—d I never do it now, except now and then, when I happen to be in a passion; and in such a case, why good G—d you know the sin is with those who provoke

me, and not with me; but upon my soul I don't think I have sworn an oath these three months, no not I faith, as I hope to be saved.

Worthy. And yet you have broken this holy law no less than five or six times in the last speech you have made.

Bragwell. L—d bless me! Sure you mistake. Good heavens, Mr. Worthy, I call G—d to witness, I have neither cursed nor swore since I have been in the house.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, this is the way in which many who call themselves very good sort of people deceive themselves. What! is it no profanation of the name of God to use it lightly, irreverently, and familiarly as you have done? Our Saviour has not only told us not to swear by the immediate name of God, but he has said, "swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth," and in order to prevent our inventing any other irreligious exclamations or expressions, he has added, "but let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than this simple affirmation and denial cometh of evil."

Bragwell. Well, well, I must take a little more care, I believe; I vow to heaven I did not know there had been so much harm in it; but my daughters seldom speak without using some of these words, and yet they wanted to make me believe the other day that it is monstrous vulgar to swear.

Worthy. Women, even gentlewomen, who ought to correct this evil habit in their fathers, and husbands, and children, are too apt to encourage it by their own practice. And indeed they betray the profaneness of their own minds also by it, for none, who truly venerate the holy name of God, can either profane it in this manner themselves, or hear others do so without being exceedingly pained at it.

Bragwell. Well, since you are so hard upon me, I believe I must e'en give up this point—so let us pass on to the next, and here I tread upon sure ground, for as sharp as you are upon me, you can't accuse me of being a sabbath-breaker, since I go to church every Sunday of my life, unless on some very extraordinary occasion.

Worthy. For those occasions the gospel allows, by saying, "the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath." Our own sickness, or attending on the sickness of others, are lawful impediments.

Bragwell. Yes, and I am now and then obliged to look at a drove of beasts, or to go a journey, or to take some medicine, or perhaps some friend may call upon me, or it may be very cold, or very hot, or very rainy.

Worthy. Poor excuses, Mr. Bragwell; I am afraid these will not pass on the day of judgment. But how is the rest of your Sunday spent?

Bragwell. O why, I assure you, I often go to church in the afternoon also, and even if I am ever so sleepy.

Worthy. And so you finish your nap at church, I suppose.

Bragwell. Why as to that, to be sure we do contrive to have something a little nicer than common for dinner on a Sunday; in consequence of which one eats, you know, a little more than ordinary; and having nothing to do on that day, one has more leisure to take a chearful glass; and all these things will make one a little heavy you know.

Worthy. And don't you take a little ride in the morning, and look at your sheep when the weather is good, and so fill your mind just before you go to church with thoughts of them? and when you come away again don't you settle an account, or write a few letters of business?

Bragwell. I can't say but I do, but that is nothing to anybody, as long as I set a good example by keeping to my church.

Worthy. And how do you pass your Sunday evenings?

Bragwell. My wife, and daughters go a visiting of a Sunday afternoon. My daughters are glad to get out at any rate, and as to my wife, she says, that being ready dressed it is a pity to lose the opportunity, besides it saves her time on a week day; so then you see I have it all my own way, and when I have got rid of the ladies, who are ready to faint at the smell of tobacco, I can venture to smoak a pipe, and drink a sober glass of punch with half a dozen friends.

Worthy. Which punch being made of smuggled brandy, and drank on the Lord's day, in very vain, as well as profane worldly company, you are enabled to break both the law of God, and that of your country at a stroke: and I suppose when you are got together, you speak of your cattle, or of your crops, after which perhaps you talk over a few of your neighbours' faults, and then you brag a little of your own wealth, or your own achievements.

Bragwell. Why you seem to know us so well, that any one would think you had been sitting behind the curtain, and yet you are a little mistaken too, for I think we have hardly said a word for several of our last Sundays on any thing but politics.

Worthy. And do you find that you much improve your Christian charity by that subject?

Bragwell. Why to be sure we do quarrel 'till we are very near fighting, that is the worst on't.

Worthy. And then you call names, and swear a little, I suppose.

Bragwell. Why when one is contradicted and put in a passion you know, flesh and blood can't bear it.

Worthy. And when all your friends are gone home, what becomes of the rest of the evening?

Bragwell. That is just as it happens, sometimes I read the newspaper; and as one is generally most tired on the days one does nothing, I go to bed earlier than on other days, that I may be more fit to get up to my business the next morning.

Worthy. So you shorten Sunday as much as you can, by cutting off a bit at both ends, I suppose; for I take it for granted, you lie a little later in the morning.

Bragwell. Come, come. We shan't get through the whole ten to-night if you stand snubbing one at this rate. You may pass over the fifth, for my father and mother have been dead since I was a boy, so I am clear of that scrape.

Worthy. There are, however, many relative duties in that commandment; unkindness to all kindred is forbidden.

Bragwell. O, if you mean my turning off my nephew Tom, the plough-boy, you must not blame me for that, it was all my wife's fault. He was as good a lad as ever lived to be sure, and my own brother's son, but my wife could not bear that a boy in a carter's frock should be about the house, calling her aunt. We quarrelled like dog and cat about it; and when he was turned away we did not speak for a week.

Worthy. Which was a fresh breach of the commandment; a worthy nephew turned out of doors, and a wife not spoken to for a week, are no very convincing proofs of your observance of the fifth commandment.

Bragwell. Well, I long to come to the sixth, for you don't think I commit murder I hope.

Worthy. I am not sure of that.

Bragwell. What kill any body?

Worthy. Why the laws of the land indeed, and the disgrace attending it, are almost enough to keep any man from actual murder; let me ask, however, do you never give way to unjust anger, and passion, and revenge? as for instance, do you never feel your resentment kindle against some of the politicians who contradict you on a Sunday night? and do you never push your animosity against somebody that has affronted you, further than the occasion will justify?

Bragwell. Hark'ee, Mr. Worthy, I am a man of substance, and nobody shall offend me without my being even with him. So as to injuring a man, if he affronts me first, there's nothing but good reason in that.

Worthy. Very well! only bear in mind that you wilfully break this commandment, whether you abuse your servant, are angry at your wife, watch for a moment to revenge an injury on your neighbour, or even wreak your passion on a harmless beast; for you have then the seeds of murder working in your breast; and if there were no law, no gibbet to check you, and no fear of disgrace neither, I am not sure where you would stop.

Bragwell. Why, Mr. Worthy, you have a strange way of explaining the commandments, so you set me down for a murderer merely because I bear hatred to a man who has done me a hurt, and am glad to do him a like injury in my turn. I am sure I should want spirit if I did not.

Worthy. I go by the scripture rule, which says, "he that hateth his brother is a murderer," and again, "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Besides, Mr. Bragwell, you made it a part of your boast that you said the Lord's Prayer every day, wherein you pray to God to forgive you your trespasses as you forgive them that trespass against you.—If therefore you do not forgive them that trespass against you, in that case, you pray daily that your own trespasses may never be forgiven.

Bragwell. Well, come let us make haste and get through these commandments. The next is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," thank God neither I nor my family can be said to break the seventh commandment.

Worthy. Here again, remember how Christ himself hath said, "whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." These are no far-fetched expressions of mine, Mr. Bragwell, they are the words of Jesus Christ. I hope you will not charge him with having carried things too far, for if you do, you charge him with being mistaken in the religion he taught, and this can only be accounted for, by supposing him an impostor.

Bragwell. Why, upon my word, Mr. Worthy, I don't like these sayings of his, which you quote upon me so often, and that is the truth of it, and I can't say I feel much disposed to believe them.

Worthy. I hope you believe in Jesus Christ. I hope you believe that creed of yours which you also boasted of your repeating so regularly.

Bragwell. Well, well, I'll believe any thing you say rather than stand quarrelling with you.

Worthy. I hope then you will allow, that since it is committing adultery to look at a woman with even an irregular thought, it follows from the same rule, that all immodest dress in your daughters, or indecent jests and double meanings in yourself; all loose songs or novels; and all diversions also which have a like dangerous tendency, are forbidden by the seventh commandment; for it is most plain from what Christ has said, that it takes in not only the act but the inclination, the desire, the indulged imagination; the act is only the last and highest degree of any sin, the topmost round as it were of a ladder, to which all the lower rounds are as so many steps and stages.

Bragwell. Strict indeed, Mr. Worthy, but let us go on to the next; you won't pretend to say *I steal.* Mr. Bragwell, I trust, was never known to rob on the highway, to break open his neighbour's house, or to use false weights or measures.

Worthy. No, nor have you ever been under any temptation to do it, and yet there are a thousand ways of breaking the eighth commandment besides actual stealing; for instance, do you never hide the faults of the goods you sell, and highten the faults of those you buy? Do you never take advantage of an ignorant dealer, and ask more for a thing than

it is worth? Do you never turn the distressed circumstances of a man, who has something to sell, to your own unfair benefit, and thus act as unjustly by him as if you had stolen? Do you never cut off a shilling from a workman's wages, under a pretence which your conscience can't justify? Do you never pass off an unsound horse for a sound one? Do you never conceal the real rent of your estate from the overseers, and thereby rob the poor-rates of their legal due?

Bragwell. Pooh! these things are done every day. I shan't go to set up for being better than my neighbours in these sort of things; these little matters will pass muster.—I don't set up for a reformer.—If I am as good as the rest of my neighbours, no man can call me to account; I'm not worse, I trust, and I don't pretend to be better.

Worthy. You must be tried hereafter at the bar of God, and not by a jury of your fellow-creatures; and the scriptures are given us, in order to shew by what rule we shall be judged. How many or how few do as you do, is quite aside from the question; Jesus Christ has even told us to strive to enter in at the *strait* gate, so that we ought rather to take fright, from our being like the common run of people, than to take comfort from our being so.

Bragwell. Come, I don't like all this close work—it makes a man feel I don't know how—I don't find myself so happy as I did—I don't like this fishing in troubled waters—I'm as merry as a grig when I let these things alone—I'm glad we are got to the ninth. But I suppose I shall be lugged in there too, head and shoulders. Any one who did not know me would really think I was a great sinner, by your way of putting things; I don't bear false witness however.

Worthy. You mean, I suppose, you would not swear a man's life away falsely before a magistrate, but do you take equal care not to slander or backbite him? Do you never misrepresent a good action of a man you have quarrelled with as if it was a bad one? or do you never make a bad one worse than it is, by your manner of telling it? even when you invent no false circumstance, do you never give such a colour, to those you relate, as to leave a false impression on the mind of the hearers? Do you never twist a story so as to make it tell a little better for yourself, and a little worse for your neighbour, than truth and justice warrant?

Bragwell. Why, as to that matter, all this is only natural.

Worthy. Aye, much too natural to be right, I doubt. Well, now we are got to the last of the commandments.

Bragwell. Yes, I have run the gauntlet finely through them all; you will bring me in guilty here I suppose, for the pleasure of going through with it, for you condemn without judge or jury, master Worthy.

Worthy. The culprit, I think, has hitherto pleaded guilty to the evidence brought against him. The tenth commandment, however, goes to the root and principal of evil, it dives to the bottom of things; this command checks the first rising of sin in the heart, teaches us to strangle it in the birth as it were, before it breaks out in those acts which are forbidden; as for instance, every man covets before he proceeds to steal, nay, many covet who dare not steal, lest they should suffer for it.

Bragwell. Why, lookee, Mr. Worthy, I don't understand these new-fashioned explanations; one should not have a grain of sheer goodness left, if every thing one does is to be frittered away at this rate; I am not, I own, quite so good as I thought, but if what you say were true, I should be so miserable, I should not know what to do with myself. Why, I tell you, all the world may be said to break the commandments at this rate.

Worthy. Very true. All the world, and I myself also, are but too apt to break them, if not in the letter, at least in the spirit of them. Why then all the world are (as the scripture expresses it) "guilty before God." And if guilty, they should own they are guilty, and not stand up and justify themselves as you do, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Well, according to my notion, I am a very honest man, and honesty is the sum and substance of all religion, say I.

Worthy. All truth, honesty, justice, order, and obedience, grow out of the christian religion. The true christian acts, at all times, and on all occasions, from the pure and spiritual principle of love to God, on this principle, he is upright in his dealings, true to his word, kind to the poor, helpful to the oppressed. In short, if he truly loves God, he must do justice, and *can't help* loving mercy. Christianity is a uniform con-

sistent thing. It does not allow us to make up for the breach of one part of God's law, by our strictness in observing another. There is no sponge in one duty, that can wipe out the spot of another sin.

Bragwell. Well, but at this rate, I should be always puzzling and blundering, and should never know for certain whether I was right or not, whereas I am now quite satisfied with myself, and have no doubts to torment me.

Worthy. One way of knowing whether we really desire to obey the whole law of God is this; when we find we have as great a regard to that part of it, the breach of which does not touch our own interest, as to that part which does. For instance, a man robs me; I am in a violent passion with him, and when it is said to me, doest thou well to be angry? I answer, I do well. *Thou shalt not steal* is a law of God, and this fellow has broken that law. Aye, but says conscience, 'tis *thy own property*, which is in question.—He has broken *thy* hedge—he has stolen *thy* sheep—he has taken *thy* purse. Art thou therefore sure whether it is his violation of thy property, or of God's law, which provokes thee? I will put a second case—I hear another swear most grievously; or I meet him coming drunk out of an alehouse; or I find him singing a loose, profane song. If I am not as much grieved for this blasphemer, or this drunkard, as I was for the robber; if I do not take the same pains to bring him to a sense of his sin, which I did to bring the robber to justice, "how dwelleth the love of God in me?" Is it not clear that I value my own sheep more than God's commandments? That I prize my purse more than I love my Maker? In short, whenever I find out that I am more jealous for my own property than for God's law: more careful about my own reputation than *his* honour, I always suspect I am got upon wrong ground, and that even my right actions are not proceeding from a right principle.

Bragwell. Why what in the world would you have me do?

Worthy. You must confess that your sins *are* sins. You must not merely call them sins, while you see no guilt in them; but you must confess them so as to hate and detest them; so as to be habitually humbled under the sense of them; so as to trust for salvation not in your freedom from them, but in

the mercy of a Saviour; and so as to make it the chief business of your life to contend against them, and in the main to forsake them. And remember that if you seek for a deceitful gaiety, rather than a well grounded cheerfulness; if you prefer a false security to final safety, and now go away to your cattle and your farm, and dismiss the subject from your thoughts lest it should make you uneasy; I am not sure that this simple discourse may not appear against you at the day of account, as a fresh proof that you "loved darkness rather than light," and so increase your condemnation.

Mr. Bragwell was more affected than he cared to own. He went to bed with less spirits and more humility than usual. He did not however care to let Mr. Worthy see the impression which it had made upon him; but at parting next morning, he shook him by the hand more cordially than usual, and made him promise to return his visit in a short time.

PART III.

MR. BRAGWELL, when he returned home from his visit to Mr. Worthy, found that he was not quite so happy as he had formerly been. The discourses of Mr. Worthy had broken in not a little on his comfort. And he began to suspect that he was not so completely in the right as his vanity had led him to believe. He seemed also to feel less satisfaction in the idle gentility of his own daughters, since he had been witness to the simplicity, modesty, and usefulness of those of Mr. Worthy. And he could not help seeing that the vulgar violence of his wife did not produce so much family happiness at home, as the humble piety and quiet diligence of Mrs. Worthy produced in the house of his friend.

Happy would it have been for Mr. Bragwell if he had followed up those new convictions of his own mind, which would have led him to struggle against the power of evil principles in himself, and to have controuled the force of evil habits in his family. But his convictions were just strong enough to make him uneasy under his errors, without driving

him to reform them. The slight impression soon wore off, and he fell back into his old practices. Still his esteem for Mr. Worthy was not at all abated by the plain dealing of that honest friend. It is true he dreaded his piercing eye. He felt that his example held out a constant reproof to himself. Yet such is the force of early affection and rooted reverence, that he longed to see him at his house. This desire, indeed, as is commonly the case, was made up of mixed motives. He wished for the pleasure of his friend's company; he longed for that favourite triumph of a vulgar mind, an opportunity of shewing him his riches; and he thought it would raise his credit in the world, to have a man of Mr. Worthy's character at his house.

Mr. Bragwell, it is true, still went on with the same eagerness in gaining money, and the same ostentation in spending it. But though he was as covetous as ever, he was not quite so sure that it was right to be so. While he was actually engaged abroad indeed, in transactions with his dealers, he was not very scrupulous about the means by which he *got* his money; and while he was indulging in festivity with his friends at home, he was easy enough as to the manner in which he *spent* it. But a man can neither be making bargains, nor making feasts always; there must be some intervals between these two great objects for which worldly men may be said to live; and in some of these intervals the most worldly form, perhaps, some random plans of amendment. And though many a one may say in the fullness of enjoyment, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," yet hardly any man, perhaps, allows himself to say, even in the most secret moments, I will *never* retire from business—I will *never* repent—I will *never* think of death—Eternity shall *never* come into my thoughts. The most that such an one probably ventures to say is, I need not repent *yet*; I will continue such a sin a little longer; it will be time enough to think on the next world when I am no longer fit for the business or the pleasures of this.

Such was the case with Bragwell. He set up in his own mind a general distant sort of resolution, that *some years hence*, when he should be a *few years older*, and a *few* thousands richer; when a few more of his *present schemes should be completed*, he would then think of altering his

coure of life. He would then certainly set about spending a religious old age; he would reform some practices in his dealings, or perhaps quit business intirely; he would think about reading good books, and when he had completed such and such a purchase, he would even begin to give something to the poor, but at present he really had little to spare for charity. The very reason why he should have given more, was just the cause he assigned for not giving at all, namely, the *hardness of the times*. The true, grand source of charity, self-denial, never came into his head. *Spend less* that you may *save more*, he would have thought a shrewd maxim enough. But *spend less* that you may *spare more*, never entered into his book of Proverbs.

At length the time came when Mr. Worthy had promised to return his visit. It was indeed a little hastened by the notice that Mr. Bragwell would have in the course of the week, a piece of land to sell by auction; and though Mr. Worthy believed the price was likely to be above his pocket, yet he knew it was an occasion which would be likely to bring the principal farmers of that neighbourhood together, some of whom he wanted to meet. And it was on this occasion that Mr. Bragwell prided himself, that he should shew his neighbours so sensible a man as his dear friend Mr. Worthy.

Worthy arrived at his friend's house on the Saturday, time enough to see the house, and garden, and grounds of Mr. Bragwell by day-light. He saw with pleasure (for he had a warm and generous heart) those evident signs of his friend's prosperity, but as he was a man of a sober mind, and was a most exact dealer in truth, he never allowed his tongue the licence of immodest commendation, which he used to say either savoured of flattery or envy. Indeed he never rated mere worldly things so highly as to bestow upon them undue praise. His calm approbation somewhat disappointed the vanity of Mr. Bragwell, who could not help secretly suspecting that his friend, as good a man as he was, was not quite free from envy. He felt, however, very much inclined to forgive this jealousy, which he feared the sight of his ample property, and handsome habitation, must naturally awaken in the mind of a man whose own possessions were so inferior. He practised the usual trick of ordinary and

vulgar minds, that of pretending himself to find some fault with those things which were particularly deserving praise, when he found Worthy disposed to pass them over in silence.

When they came in to supper, he affected to talk of the comforts of Mr. Worthy's *little* parlour, by way of calling his attention to his own large one. He repeated the word *snug*, as applied to every thing at Mr. Worthy's, with the plain design to make comparisons favourable to his own more ample domains. He contrived, as he passed by to his chair, by a seeming accident, to push open the door of a large beaufet in the parlour, in which all the finery was most ostentatiously set to view. He protested, with a look of satisfaction which belied his words, that for his part he did not care a farthing for all this trumpery; and then smiling and rubbing his hands, added with an air of no small importance, what a good thing it is though for people of substance, that the tax on plate is taken off. You are a happy man, Mr. Worthy, you do not feel these things; tax or no tax it is all the same to you. He took care during this speech, by a cast of his eye, to direct Mr. Worthy's attention to a great profusion of the brightest cups, salvers and tankards, and other shining ornaments, which crowded the beaufet. Mr. Worthy gravely answered; Mr. Bragwell, it was indeed a tax which could not affect so plain a man as myself, but as it fell on a mere luxury, and therefore could not hurt the poor, I was always sorry that it could not be made productive enough to be continued. A man in my middling situation, who is contented with a good glass of beer, poured from a handsome earthen mug, the glass, the mug, and the beer, all of English manufacture, will be but little disturbed at taxes on plate or on wine; but he will regret, as I do, that many of these taxes are so much evaded, that new taxes are continually brought on to make up the deficiencies of the old.

During supper the young ladies sat in disdainful silence, not deigning to bestow the smallest civility on so plain a man as Mr. Worthy. They left the room with their mamma as soon as possible, being impatient to get away to ridicule their father's friend at full liberty.

The Dance; or, the Christmas Merry-making.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Worthy asked Bragwell how his family comforts stood, and how his daughters, who, he said, were really fine young women, went on. O, as to that, replied Bragwell, pretty much like other men's handsome daughters, I suppose, that is, worse and worse. I really begin to apprehend that their fantastical notions have gained such a head, that after all the money I have scraped together, I shall never get them well married. Betsy has just lost as good an offer as any girl could desire, young Wilson, an honest, substantial grazier as any in the county. He not only knows every thing proper for his station, but is pleasing in his behaviour, and a pretty scholar into the bargain; he reads history books and voyages, of a winter's evening, to his infirm father, instead of going to the card assembly in our town; he neither likes drinking nor sporting, and is a sort of favourite with our parson, because he takes in the weekly numbers of a fine Bible with cuts, and subscribes to the Sunday School, and makes a fuss about helping the poor, these dear times, as they call them, but I think they are good times for *us*, Mr. Worthy. Well, for all this, Betsy only despised him, and laughed at him; but as he is both handsome and rich, I thought she might come round at last; and so I invited him to come and stay a day or two at Christmas, when we have always a little sort of merry-making here. But it would not do. He scorned to talk that palavering stuff which she has been used to in the marble covered books I told you of. He told her, indeed, that it would be the happiness of his heart to live with her, which I own I thought was as much as could be expected of any man. But Miss had no notion of marrying one who was only desirous of living with her. No, no, forsooth, her lover must declare himself ready to die for her, which honest Wilson was not such a fool as to offer to do. In the afternoon, however, he got a little into her favour by making out a rebus or two, in the Lady's Diary, and she condescended to say, she did not think Mr. Wilson had been so good a scholar; but he soon spoilt all again. We had a bit of a hop in the evening. The young man, though he had not much taste for those sort of gambols, yet thought he could foot it a little in the old-fashioned way. So he asked Betsy to be his

partner. But when he asked what dance they should call, Miss drew up her head, and in a strange gibberish, said she should dance nothing but a *Menuet de la Cour*, and ordered him to call it; Wilson stared, and honestly told her she must call it herself, for he could neither spell nor pronounce such outlandish words. I burst out a laughing, and told him, I supposed it was something like questions and commands, and if so, that was much merrier than dancing. Seeing her partner standing stock still, and not knowing how to get out of the scrape, the girl began by herself, and fell to swimming, and sinking, and capering, and flourishing, and postering, for all the world just like the man on the slack rope at our fair. But seeing Wilson standing like a stuck pig, and we all laughing at her, she resolved to wreak her malice upon him; so, with a look of rage and disdain, she advised him to go down country bumkin, with the dairy maid, who would make a much fitter partner, as well as wife, for him, than she could do. I am quite of your mind, Miss, said he, with more spirit than I thought was in him; you may make a good partner for a dance, but you would make a sad one to go through life with. I will take my leave of you, Miss, with this short story. I had lately a pretty large concern in hay-jobbing, which took me to London. I waited a good while in the Hay-Market for my dealer, and, to pass away the time, I stepped into a sort of singing play-house there, where I was grieved to the heart to see young women painted and dizened out, and capering away just as you have been doing. I thought it bad enough in them, and wondered the quality could be entertained with such indecent mummery. But little did I think to meet with the same paint, finery, and tricks, in a farm house. I will never marry a woman who despises me, nor the station in which I should place her, and so I take my leave.—Poor girl how she *was* provoked! to be publicly refused, and turned off, as it were, by a grazier! But it was of use to some of the other girls, who have not held up their heads quite so high since, nor painted quite so red, but have condescended to speak to their equals.

But how I run on! I forget it is Saturday night, and that I ought to be paying my workmen, who are all waiting for me without.

Saturday Night; or, the Workmen's Wages.

As soon as Mr. Bragwell had done paying his men, Mr. Worthy, said to him, I have made it a habit, and I hope not an unprofitable one, of trying to turn to some moral use, not only all the events of daily life, but all the employments of it too. And though it occurs so often, I hardly know one that sets me a thinking more seriously than the ordinary business you have been just discharging.—Aye, said Bragwell, it sets me thinking too, and seriously, as you say, when I observe how much the price of wages is increased.—Yes, yes, you are ready enough to think of that, said Worthy, but you say not a word of how much the value of your land is increased, and that the more you pay, the more you can afford to pay. But the thoughts I spoke of are quite of another cast. When I call in my labourers, on a Saturday night, to pay them, it often brings to my mind the great and general day of account, when I, and you, and all of us, shall be called to our grand and awful reckoning, when we shall go to receive *our* wages, master and servants, farmer and labourer. When I see that one of my men has failed of the wages he should have received, because he has been idling at a fair; another has lost a day by a drinking bout, a third confesses that, though he had task work, and might have earned still more, yet he has been careless, and has not his full pay to receive; this, I say, sometimes sets me on thinking whether I also have made the most of my time. And when I come to pay even the more diligent who have worked all the week; when I reflect that even these have done no more than it was their duty to do, I cannot help saying to myself, night is come; Saturday night is come. No repentance, or diligence on the part of these poor men can make a bad week's work good. This week is gone into eternity. To-morrow is the season of rest; working time is over. My life also will soon be swallowed up in eternity; soon the space allotted me for diligence, for labour, will be over. Soon will the grand question be asked, "What hast thou done? Didst thou use thy working days to the end for which they were given?" With some such thoughts I commonly go to bed, and they help to quicken me to a keener diligence for the next week.

Some Account of a Sunday in Mr. Bragwell's Family.

Mr. Worthy had been for so many years used to the sober ways of his own well-ordered family, that he greatly disliked to pass a Sunday in any house of which religion was not the governing principle. Indeed, he commonly ordered his affairs, and regulated his journeys with an eye to this object. To pass a Sunday in an irreligious family, said he, is always unpleasant, often unsafe. I seldom find I can do them any good, and they may perhaps do me some harm. At least, I am giving a sanction to their manner of passing it, if I pass it in the same manner. If I reprove them, I subject myself to the charge of singularity, and of being "righteous over much;" if I do *not* reprove them, I confirm and strengthen them in evil. And whether I reprove them or not, I certainly partake of their guilt if I spend it as they do.

He had, however, so strong a desire to be useful to Mr. Bragwell, that he at length determined to break through his common practice, and pass the Sunday at his house. Mr. Worthy was surprised to find that though the church bell was going, the breakfast was not ready, and expressed his wonder how this should be the case in so industrious a family. Bragwell made some aukward excuses. He said his wife worked her servants so hard all the week, that even she, as notable as she was, a little relaxed from the strictness of her demands on Sunday mornings; and he owned that in a general way, no one was up early enough for church. He confessed that his wife commonly spent the morning in making puddings, pies, and cakes, to last through the week, as Sunday was the only leisure time she and her maids had. Mr. Worthy soon saw an uncommon bustle in the house. All hands were busy. It was nothing but baking, and boiling, and frying, and roasting, and running, and scolding, and eating. The boy was kept from church to clean the plate, the man to gather the fruit, the mistress to make the cheese-cakes, the maids to dress the dinner, and the young ladies to dress themselves.

The truth was, Mrs. Bragwell, who had heard much of the order and good management of Mr. Worthy's family, but who looked down with disdain upon them as far less rich than herself, was resolved to indulge her vanity upon the present

occasion. She was determined to be even with Mrs. Worthy, in whose praises Bragwell had been so loud, and felt no small pleasure in the hope of making her guest uneasy, when he should be struck with the display both of her skill and her wealth. Mr. Worthy was indeed struck to behold as large a dinner as he had been used to see at a Justice's meeting. He, whose frugal and pious wife had accustomed him only to such a plain Sunday's dinner, as could be dressed without keeping any one from church, when he surveyed the loaded table of his friend, instead of feeling that envy which these grand preparations were meant to raise, felt nothing but disgust at the vanity of his friend's wife, mixed with much thankfulness for the piety of his own.

After having made the dinner wait a long time, the Miss Bragwells marched in, dressed as if they were going to the assize-ball; they looked very scornful at having been so hurried; though they had been dressing ever since they got up, and their fond father, when he saw them so fine, forgave all their impertinence, and cast an eye of triumph on Mr. Worthy, who felt he had never loved his own humble daughters so well as at that moment. In the afternoon the whole party went to church. To do them justice, it was indeed their common practice once a day, when the weather was good, and the road was neither dusty nor dirty, when the minister did not begin too early, when the young ladies had not been disappointed of their new bonnets on the Saturday night, and when they had no smart company in the house who rather wished to stay at home. When this last was the case, which to say the truth, happened pretty often, it was thought a piece of good manners to conform to the humour of the guests. Mr. Bragwell had this day forborne to ask any of his usual company, well knowing that their vain and worldly conversation would only serve to draw on him some new reprimand from his friend.

Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters picked up, as usual, a good deal of acquaintance at church. Many compliments passed, and much of the news of the week was retailed before the service began. They waited with impatience for the reading the lessons as a licensed season for whispering, and the subject begun during the lessons, was finished while they were singing. The young ladies made an appointment for the after-

noon with a friend in the next pew, while their mamma took the opportunity of enquiring the character of a daity maid, which she observed with a compliment to her own good management, would save time on a week-day.

Mr. Worthy, who found himself quite in a new world, returned home with his friend alone. In the evening he ventured to ask Bragwell, if he did not, on a Sunday night, at least, make it a custom to read and pray with his family. Bragwell told him, he was sorry to say he had no family at home, else he should like to do it for the sake of example. But as his servants worked hard all the week, his wife was of opinion that they should then have a little holiday. Mr. Worthy pressed it home upon him, whether the utter neglect of his servants' principles was not likely to make a heavy article in his final account: and asked him if he did not believe that the too general liberty of meeting together, jaunting, and diverting themselves, on Sunday evenings, was not often found to produce the worst effects on the morals of servants, and the good order of families? I put it to your conscience, said he, Mr. Bragwell, whether Sunday, which was meant as a blessing and a benefit, is not, as it is commonly kept, turned into the most mischievous part of the week, by the selfish kindness of masters, who, not daring to set their servants about any public work, allot them that day to follow their own devices, that they themselves may with more rigour refuse them a little indulgence and a reasonable holiday in the working part of the week, which a good servant has now and then a fair right to expect. Those masters who will give them half, or all the Lord's day, will not spare them a single hour of a working day. *Their* work *must* be done; God's work may be let alone.

Mr. Bragwell owned that Sunday had produced many mischiefs in his own family. That the young men and maids, having no eye upon them, frequently went to improper places with other servants, turned adrift like themselves. That in these parties the poor girls were too frequently led astray, and the men got to public houses, and fives playing. But it was none of his business to watch them. His family only did as others do; indeed it was his wife's concern; and as she was so good a manager on other days, that she would

not spare them an hour to visit a sick father or mother, it would be hard, she said, if they might not have Sunday afternoon to themselves, and she could not blame them for making the most of it. Indeed, she was so indulgent in this particular, that she often excused the men from going to church that they might serve the beasts, and the maids that they might get the milking done before the holiday part of the evening came on. She would not indeed hear of any competition between doing *her* work and taking their pleasure; but when the difference lay between their going to church and taking their pleasure, he *must* say that for his wife, she always inclined to the good-natured side of the question. She is strict enough in keeping them sober, because drunkenness is a costly sin; and to do her justice, she does not care how little they sin at her expence.

Well, said Mr. Worthy, I always like to examine both sides fairly, and to see the different effects of opposite practices; now, which plan produces the greatest share of comfort to the master, and of profit to the servants in the long run? Your servants, 'tis likely, are very much attached to you; and very fond of living where they get their own way in so great a point.

O, as to that, replied Bragwell, you are quite out. My house is a scene of discord, mutiny, and discontent. And though there is not a better manager in England than my wife, yet she is always changing her servants, so that every quarter-day is a sort of goal-delivery at my house, and when they go off, as they often do, at a moment's warning, to own the truth, I often give them money privately, that they may not carry my wife before the Justice to get their wages.

I see, said Mr. Worthy, that all your worldly compliances do not procure you even worldly happiness. As to my own family, I take care to let them see that their pleasure is bound up with their duty, and that what they may call my strictness, has nothing in view but their safety and happiness. By this means, I commonly gain their love as well as secure their obedience. I know that with all my care I am liable to be disappointed, "from the corruption that is in the world through sin." But whenever this happens, so far from encouraging me in remissness, it only serves to quicken my zeal. If, by God's blessing, my servant turns out a good Christian,

I have been an humble instrument in his hand of saving a soul committed to my charge.

Mrs. Bragwell came home, but brought only one of her daughters with her, the other, she said, had given them the slip, and was gone with a young friend, and would not return for a day or two. Mr. Bragwell was greatly displeased; as he knew that young friend had but a slight character, and kept bad acquaintances. Mrs. Bragwell came in, all hurry and bustle, saying, if her family did not go to bed with the lamb on Sundays, when they had nothing to do, how could they rise with the lark on Mondays, when so much was to be done.

Mr. Worthy had this night much matter for reflection. We need not, said he, go into the great world to look for dissipation and vanity. We can find both in a farm-house. As for me and my house, continued he, we will serve the Lord every day, but especially on Sundays. It is the day which the Lord hath made: hath made for himself; we will rejoice in it, and consider the religious use of it not only as a duty but as a privilege.

PART IV.

It was mentioned in the last part of this History, that the chief reason which had drawn Mr. Worthy to visit his friend just at the present time, was, that Mr. Bragwell had a small estate to sell by auction. Mr. Worthy, though he did not think he should be a bidder, wished to be present, as he had business to settle with one or two persons, who were expected at the Golden Lion on that day, and he had put off his visit till he had seen the sale advertised in the county paper.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy set out early on the Monday morning, on their way to the Golden Lion, a small inn, in a neighbouring market-town. As they had time before them, they had agreed to ride slowly, that they might converse on some useful subject; but here, as usual, they had two opinions about the same thing. Mr. Bragwell's notion of an useful subject was, something by which money was to

be got, and a good bargain struck. Mr. Worthy was no less a man of business than his friend. His schemes were wise, and his calculations just; his reputation for integrity and good sense made him the common judge and umpire in his neighbours' affairs, while no one paid a more exact attention to every transaction of his own. But the business of getting money was not with him the first, much less was it the whole concern of the day. Every morning when he rose he remembered that he had a Maker to worship, as well as a family to maintain. Religion, however, never made him neglect business, though it sometimes led him to postpone it. He used to say, no man had any reason to expect God's blessing through the day who did not ask it in the morning; nor was he likely to spend the day in the fear of God, who did not begin it with his worship. But he had not the less sense, spirit, and activity, when he was among men abroad, because he had first served God at home.

As these two farmers rode along, Mr. Worthy took occasion, from the fineness of the day, and the beauty of the country through which they passed, to turn the discourse to the goodness of God, and our infinite obligations to him. He knew that the transition from thanksgiving to prayer would be natural and easy, and he therefore slid, by degrees, into that important subject: and he observed, that secret prayer was a duty of universal obligation, which every man had it in his power to fulfil; and which he seriously believed was the ground-work of all religious practice, and all devout affections.

Mr. Bragwell felt conscious that he was very negligent and irregular in the performance of this duty; indeed he considered it as a mere ceremony, or at least, as a duty which might give way to the slightest temptation of drowsiness at night, or of business in the morning. As he knew he did not live in the conscientious performance of this practice, he tried to ward off the subject, knowing what a home way his friend had of putting things. After some evasion, he at last said, he certainly thought private prayer a good custom, especially for people who have time; and those who were sick, or old, or out of business, could not do better; but that for his part, he believed much of these sort of things was not expected from men in active life.

Mr. Worthy. I should think, Mr. Bragwell, that those who are most exposed to temptation stand most in need of prayer; now there are few, methinks, who are more exposed to temptation than men in business, for those must be in most danger, at least, from the world, who have most to do with it. And if this be true, ought we not to prepare ourselves in the closet for the trials of the market, the field, and the shop? It is but putting on our armour before we go out to battle.

Bragwell. For my part, I think example is the whole of religion, and if the master of a family is orderly, and regular, and goes to church, he does every thing which can be required of him, and no one has a right to call him to account for any thing more.

Worthy. Give me leave to say, Mr. Bragwell, that highly as I rate a good example, still I must set a good principle above it. I know I must keep good order indeed, for the sake of others; but I must keep a good conscience for my own sake. To God I owe secret piety, I must therefore pray to him in private.—To my family I owe a christian example, and for that, among other reasons, I must not fail to go to church.

Bragwell. You are talking, Mr. Worthy, as if I were an enemy to Christianity. Sir, I am no heathen. Sir, I belong to the church; I go to church; I always drink prosperity to the church. You yourself, as strict as you are, in never missing it twice a day, are not a warmer friend to the church than I am.

Worthy. That is to say, you know its value as an institution, but you do not seem to know that a man may be very irreligious under the best religious institutions; and that even the most excellent of them are but *means* of being religious, and are no more religion itself than brick and mortar are prayers and thanksgivings. I shall never think, however high their profession, and even however regular their attendance, that those men truly respect the church, who bring home little of that religion which is taught in it into their own families, or their own hearts; or, who make the whole of Christianity to consist in their attendance there. Excuse me, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I am persuaded that religion is quite a proper thing for the poor; and I don't think that the multitude can ever be kept in order without it; and I am a sort of a politician, you know. We *must* have bits, and bridles, and restraints for the vulgar.

Worthy. Your opinion is very just, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, since it does not go to the root of the evil, for while you value yourself on the soundness of this principle as a politician, I wish you also to see the reason of it as a Christian; depend upon it, if religion be good for the community at large, it is equally good for every family; and what is right for a family is equally right for each individual in it. You have therefore yourself brought the most unanswerable argument why you ought to be religious yourself, by asking how we shall keep others in order without religion. For, believe me, Mr. Bragwell, there is no particular clause to except you in the gospel. There are no exceptions there in favour of any one class of men. The same restraints which are necessary for the people at large are equally necessary for men of every order, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and ignorant. If Jesus Christ died for no particular rank, class, or community, there is no one rank, class, or communion, exempt from the obedience to his laws enjoined by the gospel. May I ask you, Mr. Bragwell, what is your reason for going to church?

Bragwell. Sir, I am shocked at your question. How can I avoid doing a thing so customary and creditable? Not go to church, indeed! What do you take me for, Mr. Worthy? I am afraid you suspect me to be a papist, or a heathen, or of some religion or other that is not what it should be.

Worthy. If a foreigner were to hear how violently one set of Christians in this country often speak against another, how earnest would he suppose us all to be in religious matters; and how astonished to discover that many a man has perhaps little other proof to give of the sincerity of his own religion, except the violence with which he hates the religion of another party. It is not *irreligion* which such men hate; but the religion of the man, or the party, whom they are set against: now hatred is certainly no part of the religion of the gospel. Well, you have told me why you go to church; now pray tell me, why do you confess there on your bended

knees every Sunday, that "you have erred and strayed from God's ways!" "that there is no health in you!" "that you have done what you ought not to do!" "and that you are a miserable sinner!"

Bragwell. Because it is in the Common Prayer Book, to be sure, a book which I have heard you yourself say was written by wise and good men, the pillars of the protestant church.

Worthy. But have you no other reason?

Bragwell. No, I can't say I have.

Worthy. When you repeat that excellent form of confession, do you really feel that you *are* a miserable sinner?

Bragwell. No, I can't say I do. But that is no objection to my repeating it, because it may suit the case of many who are so. I suppose the good doctors who drew it up, intended that part for wicked people only, such as drunkards, and thieves, and murderers; for I imagine they could not well contrive to make the prayer quite suit an honest man and a rogue; and so I suppose they thought it safer to make a good man repeat a prayer which suited a rogue, than to make a rogue repeat a prayer which suited a good man; and you know it is so customary for every body to repeat the general confession, that it can't hurt the credit of the most respectable persons, though every respectable person must know they have no particular concern in it.

Worthy. Depend upon it, Mr. Bragwell, those good doctors you speak of were not quite of your opinion; they really thought that what you call honest men, were grievous sinners in a certain sense, and that the best of us stand in need of making that humble confession. Mr. Bragwell, do you believe in the fall of Adam?

Bragwell. To be sure I do, and a sad thing for Adam it was; why, it is in the Bible, is it not? It is one of the prettiest chapters in Genesis. Don't *you* believe it, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Yes, truly I do. But I don't believe it *merely* because I read it in Genesis; though I know, indeed, that I am bound to believe every part of the word of God. But I have still an additional reason for believing in the fall of the first man.

Bragwell. Have you, indeed? Now, I can't guess what that can be.

Worthy. Why, my own observation of what is within myself teaches me to believe it. It is not only the third chapter of Genesis which convinces me of the truth of the fall, but also the sinful inclinations which I find in my own heart corresponding with it. This is one of those leading truths of Christianity of which I can never doubt a moment; first, because it is abundantly expressed or implied in scripture, and next, because the consciousness of the evil nature I carry about with me confirms the doctrine beyond all doubt. Besides, is it not said in scripture, that by one man sin entered into the world, and that "all we, like sheep have gone astray; that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" and so again in twenty more places that I could tell you of?

Bragwell. Well; I never thought of this. But is not this a very melancholy sort of doctrine, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. It is melancholy, indeed, if we stop here. But while we are deploring this sad truth, let us take comfort from another, that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Bragwell. Yes; I remember I thought those very fine words, when I heard them said over my poor father's grave. But as it was in the Burial of the Dead, I did not think of taking it to myself; for I was then young and hearty, and in little danger of dying, and I have been so busy ever since that I have hardly had time to think of it.

Worthy. And yet the service pronounced at the burial of all who die, is a solemn admonition to all who live. It is there said, as indeed the scripture says also, "I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever *believeth in me* shall never die, but I will raise him up at the last day." Now do you think you *believe in Christ*, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. To be sure I do; why you are always fancying me an atheist.

Worthy. In order to believe in Christ, we must believe first in our own guilt and our own unworthiness; and when we do this we shall see the use of a Saviour, and not till then.

Bragwell. Why, all this is a new way of talking. I can't say I ever meddled with such subjects before in my life. But now, what do you advise a man to do upon your plan of religion?

Worthy. Why, all this leads me back to the ground from which we set out, I mean the duty of prayer; for if we believe that we have an evil nature within us, and that we stand in need of God's grace to help us, and a Saviour to redeem us, we shall be led of course to pray for what we so much need; and without this conviction we shall not be led to pray.

Bragwell. Well; but don't you think, Mr. Worthy that you good folks who make so much of prayer, have lower notions than we have of the wisdom of the Almighty? You think he wants to be informed of the things you tell him; whereas, I take it for granted, that he knows them already, and that, being so good as he is, he will give me every thing he sees fit to give me, without my asking it.

Worthy. God, indeed, who knows all things, knows what we want before we ask him; but still has he not said, that "with prayer and supplication we must make known our requests unto him?" Prayer is the way in which God hath said that his favour must be sought. It is the channel through which he hath declared it is his sovereign will and pleasure that his blessings should be conveyed to us. What ascends up in prayer descends again to us in blessings. It is like the rain which just now fell, and which had been drawn up from the ground in vapours to the clouds before it descended from them to the earth in that refreshing shower. Besides, prayer has a good effect on our minds; it tends to excite a right disposition towards God in us, and to keep up a constant sense of our dependance. But above all, it is the way to get the good things we want. "Ask," says the scripture, "and ye shall receive."

Bragwell. Now that is the very thing which I was going to deny. For the truth is, men do not always get what they ask; I believe if I could get a good crop for asking it, I should pray oftener than I do.

Worthy. Sometimes, Mr. Bragwell, men "ask and receive not, because they ask amiss." They ask worldly blessings, perhaps, when they should ask spiritual ones. Now the latter, which are the good things I spoke of, are always granted to those who pray to God for them, though the former are not. I have observed in the case of some worldly things I have sought for, that the grant of my prayer would have caused the misery of my life: so that God equally con-

suits our good in what he withholds, and in what he bestows.

Bragwell. And yet you continue to pray on, I suppose.

Worthy. Certainly; but then I try to mend as to the object of my prayers. I pray for God's blessing and favour, which is better than riches.

Bragwell. You seem very earnest on this subject.

Worthy. To cut the matter short, I ask then, whether prayer is not positively commanded in the gospel? When this is the case, we can never dispute about the necessity or the duty of a thing, as we may when there is no such command. Here, however, let me just add also, that a man's prayers may be turned to no small use in the way of discovering to him whatever is amiss in his life.

Bragwell. How so, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Why, suppose now, you were to try yourself by turning into the shape of a prayer every practice in which you allow yourself. For instance, let the prayer in the morning be a sort of preparation for the deeds of the day, and the prayer at night a sort of observation on those deeds. You, Mr. Bragwell, I suspect are a little inclined to covetousness; excuse me, Sir. Now suppose after you have been during a whole day a little too eager to get rich, suppose, I say, you were to try how it would sound to beg of God at night on your knees, to give you still more money, though you have already so much that you know not what to do with it. Suppose, you were to pray in the morning, "O Lord, give me more riches, though those I have are a snare and a temptation to me;" and ask him in the same solemn manner to bless all the grasping means you intend to make use of in the day, to add to your substance?

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I have no patience with you for thinking I could be so wicked.

Worthy. Hear me out, Mr. Bragwell; you turned your good nephew, Tom Broad, out of doors, you know; you owned to me it was an act of injustice. Now suppose on the morning of your doing so you had begged of God in a solemn act of prayer, to prosper the deed of cruelty and oppression, which you intended to commit that day. I see you are shocked at the thought of such a prayer. Well, then; would not hearty prayer have kept you from commit-

ting that wicked action? In short, what a life must that be, no action of which you dare beg God to prosper and bless. If once you can bring yourself to believe that it is your bounden duty to pray for God's blessing on your day's work, you will certainly grow careful about passing such a day as you may safely ask his blessing upon. The remark may be carried to sports, diversions, company. A man, who once takes up the serious use of prayer, will soon find himself obliged to abstain from such diversions, occupations, and societies, as he cannot reasonably desire that God will bless to him; and thus he will see himself compelled to leave off either the practice or the prayer. Now, Mr. Bragwell, I need not ask you which of the two he that is a real Christian will give up, sinning or praying.

Mr. Bragwell began to feel that he had not the best of the argument, and was afraid he was making no great figure in the eyes of his friend. Luckily, however, he was relieved from the difficulty into which the necessity of making some answer must have brought him, by finding they were come to the end of their little journey: and he never beheld the bunch of grapes, which decorated the sign of the Golden Lion, with more real satisfaction.

PART V.

MR. BRAGWELL and Mr. Worthy alighted at the Golden Lion. It was market-day: the inn, the yard, the town, was all alive. Mr. Bragwell was quite in his element. Money, company, and good cheer, always set his spirits afloat. He felt himself the principal man in the scene. He had three great objects in view, the sale of his land, the letting Mr. Worthy see how much he was looked up to by so many substantial people, and the shewing these people what a wise man his most intimate friend, Mr. Worthy, was. It was his way to try to borrow a little credit from every person, and every thing he was connected with, and by that credit to advance his interest and increase his wealth.

The farmers met in a large room, and while they were transacting their various concerns, those whose pursuits were the same, naturally herded together. The tanners were drawn to one corner, by the common interest which they took in bark and hides. A useful debate was carrying on at another little table, whether the practice of *sowing* wheat or of *planting* it were most profitable. Another set were disputing whether horses or oxen were best for plows. Those who were concerned in canals, sought the company of other canallers; while some, who were interested in the new bill for inclosures, wisely looked out for such as knew most about waste lands.

Mr. Worthy was pleased with all these subjects, and picked up something useful on each. It was a saying of his, that most men understood some one thing, and that he who was wise would try to learn from every man something on the subject he best knew; but Mr. Worthy made a further use of the whole. What a pity is it, said he, that Christians are not as desirous to turn their time to good account as men of business are! When shall we see religious persons as anxious to derive profit from the experience of others, as these farmers? When shall we see them as eager to turn their time to good account? While I approve these men for not being *slothful in business*, let me improve the hint, by being also *fervent in spirit*.

Shewing how much *wiser the children of this generation are than the children of light*.

When the hurry was a little over, Mr. Bragwell took a turn on the bowling-green. Mr. Worthy followed him, to ask why the sale of the estate was not brought forward. Let the auctioneer proceed to business, said he; the company will be glad to get home by day-light. I speak mostly with a view to others, for I do not think of being a purchaser myself. —I know it, said Bragwell, or I would not be such a fool as to let the cat out of the bag. But is it really possible (proceeded he, with a smile of contempt) that you should think I will sell my estate before dinner? Mr. Worthy, you are a clever man at books, and such things; and perhaps can make out an account on paper in a handsomer manner than I can; but I never found much was to be got by fine writing. As to figures, I can carry enough of them in my head to add,

divide, and multiply, more money than your learning will ever give you the fingering of. You may beat me at a book, but you are a very child at a bargain. Sell my land before dinner, indeed!

Mr. Worthy was puzzled to guess how a man was to shew more wisdom by selling a piece of ground at one hour than at another, and desired an explanation. Bragwell felt rather more contempt for his understanding than he had ever done before. Look'ee, Mr. Worthy, said he, I do not know that knowledge is of any use to a man unless he has sense enough to turn it to account. Men are my books, Mr. Worthy, and it is by reading, spelling, and putting them together to good purpose, that I have got up in the world. I shall give you a proof of this to-day. These farmers are most of them come to the Lion with a view of purchasing this bit of land of mine, if they should like the bargain. Now, as you know a thing can't be any great bargain both to the buyer and the seller too, to them and to me, it becomes me as a man of sense, who has the good of his family at heart, to secure the bargain to myself. I would not cheat any man, Sir, but I think it fair enough to turn his weakness to my own advantage; there is no law against that, you know; and this is the use of one man's having more sense than another. So, whenever I have a bit of land to sell, I always give a handsome dinner, with plenty of punch and strong beer. We fill up the morning with other business, and I carefully keep back any talk about the purchase till we have dined. At dinner we have, of course, a bit of politics. This puts most of us into a passion, and you know anger is thirsty. Besides, "Church and King," naturally bring on a good many other toasts. Now, as I am master of the feast, you know, it would be shabby in me to save my liquor, so I push about the glass one way, and the tankard the other, till all my company are as merry as kings. Every man is delighted to see what a fine hearty fellow he has to deal with, and Mr. Bragwell receives a thousand compliments. By this time they have gained as much in good humour as they have lost in sober judgment, and this is the proper moment for setting the auctioneer to work, and this I commonly do, to such good purpose, that I go home with my purse a score or two of pounds heavier than if they had not been warmed by their dinner. In the morning men are

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cool and suspicious, and have all their wits about them; but a chearful glass cures all distrust. And what is lucky, I add to my credit as well as my pocket, and get more praise for my dinner, than blame for my bargain.

Mr. Worthy was struck with the absurd vanity which could tempt a man to own himself guilty of an unfair action for the sake of shewing his wisdom. He was beginning to express his disapprobation, when they were told dinner was on the table. They went in, and were soon seated. All was mirth and good cheer. Every body agreed that no one gave such hearty dinners as Mr. Bragwell. Nothing was pitiful where he was master of the feast. Bragwell, who looked with pleasure on the excellent dinner before him, and enjoyed the good account to which he should turn it, heard their praises with delight, and cast an eye on Worthy, as much as to say, Who is the wise man now? Having a mind, for his own credit, to make his friend talk, he turned to him, saying, Mr. Worthy, I believe no people in the world enjoy life more than our class. We have money and power, we live on the fat of the land, and have as good a right to gentility as the best.

As to gentility, Mr. Bragwell, replied Worthy, I am not sure that this is among the wisest of our pretensions. But I will say, that ours is a creditable and respectable business. In ancient times, farming was the employment of princes and patriarchs; and, now-a-days, an honest, humane, sensible English yeoman, I will be bold to say, is not only a very useful, but an honourable character. But then, he must not merely think of *enjoying life*, as you call it, but he must think of living up to the great ends for which he was sent into the world. A wealthy farmer not only has it in his power to live well, but to do much good. He is not only the father of his own family, but of his workmen, his dependants, and the poor at large, especially in these hard times. He has it in his power to raise into credit all the parish offices which have fallen into disrepute, by getting into bad hands; and he can convert, what have been falsely thought mean offices, into very important ones, by his just and christian-like manner of filling them. An upright juryman, a conscientious constable, a humane overseer, an independent elector, an active superintendant of a work-house, a just arbitrator in

public disputes, a kind counsellor in private troubles; such a one, I say, fills up a station in society no less necessary; and, as far as it reaches, scarcely less important than that of a magistrate, a sheriff of a county, or even of a member of parliament. That can never be a slight or degrading office, on which the happiness of a whole parish may depend.

Bragwell, who thought the good sense of his friend reflected credit on himself, encouraged Worthy to go on, but he did it in his own vain way. Aye, very true, Mr. Worthy, said he, you are right; a leading man in our class ought to be looked up to as an example, as you say; in order to which, he should do things handsomely and liberally, and not grudge himself, or his freinds, any thing, casting an eye of complacency on the good dinner he had provided.—True, replied Mr. Worthy, he should be an example of simplicity, sobriety, and plainness of manners. But he will do well, added he, not to affect a frothy gentility, which will set but clumsily upon him. If he has money, let him spend prudently, lay up moderately for his children, and give liberally to the poor. But let him rather seek to dignify his own station, by his virtues, than to get above it by his vanity. If he acts thus, then, as long as this country lasts, a farmer of England will be looked upon as one of its most valuable members; nay more, by this conduct he may contribute to make England last the longer. The riches of the farmer, corn and cattle, are the true riches of a nation; but let him remember, that though corn and cattle *enrich* a country, nothing but justice, integrity, and religion, can *preserve* it.

Young Wilson, the worthy grazier, whom Miss Bragwell had turned off because he did not understand French dances, thanked Mr. Worthy for what he had said, and hoped he should be the better for it as long as he lived, and desired his leave to be better acquainted. Most of the others declared they had never heard a finer speech, and then, as is usual, proceeded to shew the good effect it had on them, by loose conversation, hard drinking, and whatever could counteract all that Worthy had said.

Mr. Worthy was much concerned to hear Mr. Bragwell, after dinner, whisper to the waiter, to put less and less water into every fresh bowl of punch.—This was his way; if the time they had to sit was long, then the punch was to be

weaker, as he saw no good in wasting money to make it stronger than the time required. But if time pressed, then the strength was to be encreased in due proportion, as a small quantity must then intoxicate them as much in a short time as would be required of a greater quantity had the time been longer. This was one of Mr. Bragwell's nice calculations, and this was the sort of skill on which he so much valued himself.

At length the guests were properly primed for business; just in that convenient stage of intoxication which makes men warm and rash, yet keeps short of that absolute drunkenness, which disqualifies for business. The auctioneer set to work. All were bidders, and, if possible, all would have been purchasers, so happily had the feast and the punch operated. They bid on with a still encreasing spirit, till they had got so much above the value of the land, that Bragwell, with a wink and a whisper, said, Who would sell his land fasting? Eh! Worthy? At length the estate was knocked down, at a price very far above its worth.

As soon as it was sold, Bragwell again said softly to Worthy, Five from fifty, and there remain forty-five. The dinner and drink won't cost me five pounds, and I have got fifty more than the land was worth. Spend a shilling to gain a pound, this is what I call practical arithmetic, Mr. Worthy.

Mr. Worthy was glad to get out of this scene; and seeing that his friend was quite sober, he resolved, as they rode home, to deal plainly with him. Bragwell had found out, among his calculations, that there were some sins which could only be committed by a prudent man, one at a time. For instance, he knew that a man could not well get rich, and get drunk, at the same moment, so that he used to practice one first, and the other after; but he had found out that some vices made very good company together; thus, while he had watched himself in drinking, lest he should become as unfit to sell, as his guests were to buy, he had indulged, without measure, in the good dinner he had provided. Mr. Worthy, I say, seeing him able to bear reason, rebuked him for this day's proceedings, with some severity. Bragwell bore his reproofs with that sort of patience which arises from an opinion of one's own wisdom, and a recent flush of prosperity. He behaved with that gay, good humour which grows out of

vanity and good luck. You are too squeamish, Mr. Worthy, said he, I have done nothing discreditable. These men came with their eyes open. There is no compulsion used. They are free to bid, or to let it alone. I make them welcome, and I shall not be thought a bit the worse of by them, to-morrow, when they are sober. Others do it besides me, and I shall never be ashamed of any thing, as long as I have custom on my side.

Worthy. I am sorry, Mr. Bragwell, to hear you support such practices by such arguments. There is not, perhaps, a more dangerous snare to the souls of men than is to be found in that word CUSTOM. It is a word invented to reconcile corruption with credit, and sin with safety. But no custom, no fashion, no combination of men, to set up a false standard, can ever make a wrong action right. That a thing is often done, is so far from a proof of its being right, that it is the very reason which will set a thinking man to enquire if it be not really wrong, lest he should be following "a multitude to do evil." Right is right, though only one man in a thousand pursues it, and wrong will be for ever wrong, though it be the allowed practice of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine. If this shameful custom is really common, which I hardly believe, that is a fresh reason why a conscientious man should set his face against it. And I must go so far as to say, (you will excuse me, Mr. Bragwell,) that I see no great difference, in the eye of conscience, whatever there may be in the eye of law, between your making a man first lose his reason, and then getting fifty guineas out of his pocket, *because* he has lost it; and your picking the fifty guineas out of his pocket, if you had met him dead drunk in his way home to-night. Nay, he who meets a man already drunk and robs him, commits but one sin, while he who makes him drunk first, that he may rob him him afterwards, commits two.

Bragwell gravely replied, Mr. Worthy, while I have the practice of people of credit to support me, and the law of the land to protect me, I see no reason to be ashamed of any thing I do.—Mr. Bragwell, answered Worthy, a truly honest man is not always looking sharp about him, to see how far custom and the law will bear him out; if he be honest on principle he will consult the law of his conscience, and if he be a Christian, he will consult the written law of God.

Notwithstanding this rebuff, Mr. Bragwell got home in high spirits, for no arguments could hinder him from feeling that he had fifty guineas in his purse. As soon as he came in, he gaily threw the money he had received on the table, and desired his wife to lock it up. Instead of receiving it with her usual satisfaction, she burst into a violent fit of passion, and threw it back to him. You may keep your cash yourself, said she. It is all over: we want no more money. You are a ruined man! A wicked creature, scraping and working as we have done for her! Bragwell trembled, but durst not ask what he dreaded to hear. His wife spared him the trouble, by crying out, as soon as her rage permitted, Polly is gone off! Poor Bragwell's heart sunk within him; he grew sick and giddy, and as his wife's rage swallowed up her grief, so, in his grief, he almost forgot his anger. The purse fell from his hand, and he cast a look of anguish upon it, finding, for the first time, that money could not relieve his misery.

Mr. Worthy, who, though much concerned, was less discomposed, now called to mind, that the young lady had not returned with her mother and sister the night before: he begged Mrs. Bragwell to explain this sad story. She, instead of soothing her husband, fell to reproaching him. It is all your fault, said she, you were a fool for your pains. If I had had my way, the girls never would have kept company with any but men of substance, and then they could not have been ruined.—Mrs. Bragwell, said Mr. Worthy, if she had chosen a bad man, it would be still a misfortune, even though he had been rich.—O, that would alter the case, said she, a *fat sorrow is better than a lean one.* But to marry a beggar: there is no sin like that. Here Miss Betsy, who stood sullenly by, put in a word, and said, her sister, however, had not disgraced herself by having married a farmer or a tradesman, she had, at least, made choice of a gentleman.—What marriage! what gentleman! cried the afflicted father. Tell me the worst! He was now informed that his darling daughter was gone off with a strolling player, who had been acting in the neighbouring villages lately. Miss Betsy again put in, saying, he was no stroller, but a gentleman in disguise, who only acted for his own diversion.—Does he so? said the now furious Bragwell, then he shall be transported for

mine. At this moment a letter was brought him from his new son-in-law, who desired his leave to wait upon him, and implore his forgiveness. He owned he had been shopman to a haberdasher, but thinking his person and talents ought not to be thrown away upon trade, and being also a little behind hand, he had taken to the stage with a view of making his fortune. That he had married Miss Bragwell entirely for love, and was sorry to mention so paltry a thing as money, which he despised, but that his wants were pressing; his landlord, to whom he was in debt, having been so vulgar as to threaten to send him to prison. He ended with saying, I have been obliged to shock your daughter's delicacy, by confessing my unlucky real name; I believe I owe part of my success with her to my having assumed that of Augustus Frederic Theodosius. She is inconsolable at this confession, which, as you are now my father, I must also make to you, and subscribe myself, with many blushes, by the vulgar name of, your dutiful son, TIMOTHY INCLE.

O, cried the afflicted father, as he tore the letter in a rage, Miss Bragwell married to a strolling actor! How shall I bear it?—Why I would not bear it at all, cried the enraged mother, I would never see her; I would never forgive her. I would let her starve at one corner of the barn, while that rascal, with all those pagan, popish names, was ranting away at the other. Nay, said Miss Betsy, if he is only a shopman, and if his name be really Timothy Incle, I would never forgive her neither. But who would have thought it by his looks, and by his monstrous genteel behaviour? no, he never can have so vulgar a name.

Come, come, said Mr. Worthy, were he really an honest haberdasher, I should think there was no other harm done, except the disobedience of the thing. Mr. Bragwell, this is no time to blame you, or hardly to reason with you. I feel for you sincerely. I ought not, perhaps, just at present, to reproach you for the mistaken manner in which you have bred up your daughters, as your error has brought its punishment along with it. You now see, because you now feel the evil of a false education. It has ruined your daughter; your whole plan unavoidably led to some such end. The large sums you spent to qualify them, as you thought, for a high station, could do them nothing but harm, while your habits of life properly confined them to company of a lower

station. While they were better drest than the daughters of the first gentry, they were worse taught, as to real knowledge, than the daughters of your plowmen. Their vanity has been raised by excessive finery, and kept alive by excessive flattery. Every evil temper has been fostered by indulgence. Their pride has never been controuled; their self-will has never been subdued. Their idleness has laid them open to every temptation, and their abundance has enabled them to gratify every desire. Their time, that precious talent, has been entirely wasted. Every thing they have been taught to do is of no use, while they are utterly unacquainted with all which they ought to have known. I deplore Miss Polly's false step. That she should have married a run-away shopman, turned stroller, I truly lament. But, for what husband was she qualified? For the wife of a farmer she was too idle. For the wife of a tradesman she was too expensive. For the wife of a gentleman she was too ignorant. You yourself was most to blame. You expected her to act wisely, though you never taught her that *fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom.* I owe it to you as a friend, and to myself as a Christian, to declare, that your practices in the common transactions of life, as well as your present misfortune, are almost the natural consequences of those false principles, which I protested against when you were at my house.

Mrs. Bragwell attempted several times to interrupt Mr. Worthy, but her husband would not permit it. He felt the force of all his friend said, and encouraged him to proceed. Mr. Worthy thus went on. It grieves me to say how much your own indiscretion has contributed even to bring on your present misfortune. You gave your countenance to this very company of strollers, though you knew they are acting in defiance to the laws of the land, to say no worse. They go from town to town, and from barn to barn, stripping the poor of their money, the young of their innocence, and all of their time. Do you remember with how much pride you told me that you had bespoke *The Bold Stroke for a Wife*, for the benefit of this very Mr. Frederic Theodosius? To this pernicious ribaldry you not only carried your own family, but wasted I know not how much money in treating your workmen's wives and children, in these hard times too, when they have scarcely bread to eat, or a shoe on their feet. And all

this only that you might have the absurd pleasure of seeing those flattering words, *By Desire of Mr. Bragwell*, stuck up in print at the public-house, on the blacksmith's shed, at the turnpike-gate, and on the barn-door.

Mr. Bragwell acknowledged that his friend's rebuke was but too just, and he looked so very contrite as to raise the pity of Mr. Worthy, who, in a mild voice thus went on. What I have said is not so much to reproach you with the ruin of one daughter, as from a desire to save the other. Let Miss Betsy go home with me. I do not undertake to be her gaoler, but I will be her friend. She will find in my daughters kind companions, and in my wife a prudent guide. I know she will dislike us at first, but I do not despair in time of convincing her that a sober, humble, useful, pious life, is as necessary to make us happy on earth, as it is to fit us for heaven.

Poor Miss Betsy, though she declared it would be *frightful dull*, and *monstrous vulgar*, and *dismal melancholy*, yet was she so terrified at the discontent and grumbling which she would have to endure at home, that she sullenly consented. She had none of that filial tenderness which led her to wish to stay and sooth and comfort her afflicted father. All she thought about was to get out of the way of her mother's ill humour, and to carry so much finery with her as to fill the Miss Worthy's with envy and respect. Poor girl! She did not know that envy was a feeling they never indulged, and that fine cloaths was the last thing to draw their respect. Mr. Worthy took her home next day. When they reached his house, they found there young Wilson, Miss Betsy's old admirer. She was much pleased at this, and resolved to treat him well. But her good or ill treatment now signified but little. This young grazier reverenced Mr. Worthy's character, and ever since he had met him at the Lion, had been thinking what a happiness it would be to marry a young woman bred up by such a father. He had heard much of the modesty and discretion of both the daughters, but his inclination now determined him in favour of the elder.

Mr. Worthy, who knew him to be a young man of good sense and sound principles, allowed him to become a visitor at his house, but deferred his consent to the marriage till he knew him more thoroughly. Mr. Wilson, from what he

saw of the domestic piety of this family, improved daily both in the knowledge and practice of religion, and Mr. Worthy soon formed him into a most valuable character. During this time Miss Bragwell's hopes had revived, but though she appeared in a new dress almost every day, she had the mortification of being beheld with great indifference by one whom she had always secretly liked. Mr. Wilson married before her face a girl who was greatly her inferior in fortune, person, and appearance, but who was humble, frugal, meek, and pious. Miss Bragwell now strongly felt the truth of what Mr. Wilson had once told her, that a woman may make an excellent partner for a dance, who would make a very bad one for life.

Hitherto Mr. Bragwell and his daughters had only learnt to regret their folly and vanity, as it had produced them mortification in this life; whether they were ever brought to a more serious sense of their errors, may be seen in the following parts.

PART VI.

MR. BRAGWELL was so much afflicted at the disgraceful marriage of his daughter, who ran off with Timothy Incle, the strolling-player, that he never fully recovered his spirits. His chearfulness, which had arisen from an high opinion of himself, had been confirmed by a constant flow of uninterrupted success; and that is a sort of chearfulness which is very liable to be impaired, because it lies at the mercy of every accident and cross event in life. But though his pride was now disappointed, his misfortunes had not taught him any humility, because he had not discovered that they were caused by his own fault; nor had he acquired any patience or submission, because he had not learnt that all afflictions came from the hand of God to awaken us to a deep sense of our sins, and to draw off our hearts from the perishing vanities of this life. Besides, Mr. Bragwell was one of those people, who, even if they would be thought to bear with tolerable submission such trials as appear to be

sent more immediately from Providence, yet think they have a sort of right to rebel at every misfortune which befals them through the fault of a fellow-creature; as if our fellow-creatures were not the agents and instruments by which Providence often sees fit to try or to punish us. This imprudent daughter Bragwell would not be brought to see or forgive, nor was the degrading name of Mrs. Incle ever allowed to be pronounced in his hearing. He had loved her with an excessive and undue affection; and while she gratified his vanity by her beauty and finery, he deemed her faults of little consequence; but when she disappointed his ambition by a disgraceful marriage, all his natural affection only served to increase his resentment. Yet, though he regretted her crime less than his own mortification, he never ceased in secret to lament her loss. She soon found out she was undone, and wrote in a strain of bitter repentance to ask his forgiveness. She owned that her husband, whom she had supposed to be a man of fashion in disguise, was a low person in distressed circumstances. She implored that her father, though he refused to give her husband that fortune for which alone it was now too plain he had married her, would at least allow her some subsistence, for that Mr. Incle was much in debt, and she feared in danger of a gaol. The father's heart was half melted at this account, and his affection was for a time awakened. But Mrs. Bragwell opposed his sending her any assistance. She always made it a point of duty never to forgive; for she said it only encouraged those who had done wrong once to do worse next time. For her part she had never yet been guilty of so mean and pitiful a weakness as to forgive any one; for to pardon an injury always shewed either want of spirit to feel it, or want of power to resent it. She was resolved she would never squander the money for which she had worked early and late, on a baggage who had thrown herself away on a beggar, while she had a daughter single who might raise her family by a great match. I am sorry to say that Mrs. Bragwell's anger was not owing to the undutifulness of the daughter, or the worthlessness of the husband—poverty was in her eyes the grand crime. The doctrine of forgiveness, as a religious principle, made no more a part of Mr. Bragwell's system than of his wife's, but

in natural feeling, particularly for this offending daughter, he much exceeded her.

In a few months, the youngest Miss Bragwell desired leave to return home from Mr. Worthy's. She had, indeed, only consented to go thither as a less evil of the two than staying in her father's house after her sister's elopement. But the sobriety and simplicity of Mr. Worthy's family were irksome to her. Habits of vanity and idleness were become so rooted in her mind, that any degree of restraint was a burthen; and though she was outwardly civil, it was easy to see that she longed to get away. She resolved, however, to profit by her sister's faults, and made her parents easy by assuring them she never would throw herself away on a *man who was worth nothing*. Encouraged by these promises, which were all that her parents thought they could in reason expect, her father allowed her to come home.

Mr. Worthy, who accompanied her, found Mr. Bragwell gloomy and dejected. As his house was no longer a scene of vanity and festivity, Mr. Bragwell tried to make himself and his friend believe that he was grown religious, whereas he was only become discontented. As he had always fancied that piety was a melancholy gloomy thing, and as he felt his own mind really gloomy, he was willing to think that he was growing pious. He had, indeed, gone more constantly to church, and had taken less pleasure in feasting and cards, and now and then read a chapter in the bible; but all this was because his spirits were low, and not because his heart was changed. The outward actions were more regular, but the inward man was the same. The forms of religion were resorted to as a painful duty, but this only added to his misery, while he was utterly ignorant of its spirit and its power. He still, however, reserved religion as a loathsome medicine, to which he feared he must have recourse at last, and of which he even now considered every abstinence from pleasure, or every exercise of piety as a bitter dose. His health also was impaired, so that his friend found him in a pitiable state, neither able to receive pleasure from the world, which he so dearly loved, nor from religion, which he so greatly feared. He expected to have been much commended by Worthy for the change in his way of life, but Worthy, who saw that the alteration was only owing

to the loss of animal spirits, and to the casual absence of temptation, was cautious of flattering him too much; I thought, Mr. Worthy, said he, to have received more comfort from you. I was told too, that religion was full of comfort, but I do not much find it. You were told the truth, replied Worthy; religion is full of comfort, but you must first be brought into a state fit to receive it before it can become so; you must be brought to a deep and humbling sense of sin. To give you comfort while you are puffed up with high thoughts of yourself, would be to give you a strong cordial in a high fever. Religion keeps back her cordials till the patient is lowered and emptied; emptied of self, Mr. Bragwell. If you had a wound it must be examined and cleansed, aye, and probed too, before it would be safe to put on a healing plaister. Curing it to the outward eye, while it was corrupt at bottom, would only bring on a mortification, and you would be a dead man while you trusted that the plaister was curing you. You must be, indeed, a Christian, before you can be entitled to the comforts of Christianity.—I am a Christian, said Bragwell, many of my friends are Christians, but I do not see it has done us much good.—Christianity itself, answered Worthy, cannot make us good unless it be applied to our hearts. Christian privileges will not make us Christians unless we make use of them. On that shelf I see stands your medicine. The doctor orders you to take it. *Have* you taken it?—Yes, replied Bragwell. Are you the better for it? said Worthy. —I think I am, he replied.—But, added Worthy, are you the better because the doctor has ordered it merely, or because you have also taken it?—What a foolish question, cried Bragwell. Why, to be sure the doctor might be the best doctor, and his physic the best physic in the world; but if it stood for ever on the shelf, I could not expect to be cured by it. My doctor is not a mountebank. He does not pretend to cure by a charm. The physic is good, and as it suits my case, though it is bitter, I take it.—You have now, said Worthy, explained undesignedly the reason why religion does so little good in the world. It is not a mountebank; it does not work by a charm, but offers to cure your worst corruptions by wholesome, though sometimes bitter prescriptions. But you will not take them; you will not

apply to God with the same earnest desire to be healed with which you apply to your doctor; you will not confess your sins to the one as honestly as you tell your symptoms to the other, nor read your bible with the same faith and submission with which you take your medicine. In reading it, however, you must take care not to apply to yourself the comforts which are not suited to your case. You must, by the grace of God, be brought into a condition to be entitled to the promises, before you can expect the comfort of them. Conviction is not conversion; that worldly discontent which is the effect of worldly disappointment, is not that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance*. Besides, while you have been pursuing all the gratifications of the world, do not complain that you have not all the comforts of religion too. Could you live in the full enjoyment of both *the bible would not be true.*

Bragwell now seemed resolved to set about the matter in earnest, but he resolved in his own strength; and, unluckily, the very day Mr. Worthy took leave, there happened to be a grand ball at the next town, on account of the assizes. An assize-ball is a scene to which gentlemen and ladies periodically resort to celebrate the crimes and calamities of their fellow-creaturres by dancing and music, and to divert themselves with feasting and drinking, while unhappy wretches are receiving sentence of death.

To this ball Miss Bragwell went, dressed out with a double portion of finery, pouring out on her own head the whole band-box of feathers and flowers her sister had left behind her. While she was at the ball her father formed many plans of religious reformation; he talked of lessening his business, that he might have more leisure for devotion, though not *just now*, while the markets were so high; and then he began to think of sending a handsome subscription to the infirmary; though, on second thoughts, he concluded he need not be *in a hurry*, but leave it in his will; but to give, and repent, and reform, were three things he was bent upon. But when his daughter came home at night, so happy and so fine, and telling how she had danced with 'Squire Squeeze the great corn contractor, and how many fine things he had said to her, Mr. Bragwell felt the old spirit of the world return in its full force. A marriage with Mr. Dashall Squeeze, the contractor,

was beyond his hope, for Mr. Squeeze was supposed from a very low beginning to have got rich during the war. As for Mr. Squeeze he had picked up as much of the history of his partner between the dances as he desired; he was convinced there would be no money wanting, for Miss Bragwell, who was now looked on as an only child, must needs be a great fortune, and he was too much used to advantageous contracts to let this slip. As he was gaudily dressed, and possessed all the arts of vulgar flattery, Miss Bragwell eagerly caught at the proposal to wait on her father next day. Squeeze was quite a man after Bragwell's own heart, a genius at getting money, a fine dashing fellow at spending it. He told his wife that this was the very sort of man for his daughter, for he got money like a Jew, and spent it like a Prince; but whether it was fairly got, or wisely spent, he was too much a man of the world to enquire. Mrs. Bragwell was not so run away with by appearances, but she desired her husband to be careful and quite sure that it was the right Mr. Squeeze, and no impostor. But being assured that Betsy would certainly keep her carriage, she never gave herself one thought with what sort of man she was to ride in it. To have one of her daughters drive in her own coach, filled up all her ideas of human happiness. The marriage was celebrated with great splendor, and Mr. and Mrs. Squeeze set off for London, where they had a house.

Mr. Bragwell now tried to forget that he had any other daughter, and if some thoughts of the resolutions he had made of entering on a more religious course would sometimes force themselves upon him, they were put off, like the repentance of Felix, *to a more convenient season*; and finding he was likely to have a grandchild, he became more worldly and ambitious than ever, thinking this a just pretence for adding house to house, and field to field; and there is no stratagem by which men more deceive themselves than when they make even unborn children a pretence for that rapine, or that hoarding, of which their own covetousness is the true motive. Whenever he ventured to write to Mr. Worthy about the wealth, the gaiety, and the grandeur of Mr. and Mrs. Squeeze, that faithful friend honestly reminded him of the vanity and uncertainty of worldly greatness, and the error he had been guilty of in marrying his daughter before he had taken time

to enquire into the real character of the man, saying, that he could not help foreboding that the happiness of a match made at a ball might have an end. Notwithstanding, Mr. Bragwell had paid down a larger fortune than was prudent, for fear Mr. Squeeze should fly off, yet he was surprised to receive very soon a pressing letter from him, desiring him to advance a considerable sum, as he had the offer of an advantageous purchase, which he must lose for want of money. Bragwell was staggered and refused to comply; but his wife told him he must not be shabby to such a gentleman as 'Squire Squeeze, for that she heard on all sides such accounts of their grandeur, their feasts, their carriages, and their liveries, that she and her husband ought even to deny themselves comforts to oblige such a generous son, who did all this in honour of their daughter; besides, if he did not send the money soon, they might be obliged to lay down their coach, and then she should never be able to shew her face again. At length Mr. Bragwell lent him the money on his bond: he knew Squeeze's income was large, for he had carefully enquired into this particular, and for the rest he took his word. Mrs. Squeeze also got great presents from her mother, by representing to her how expensively they were forced to live to keep up their credit, and what honour she was conferring on the family of the Bragwell's by spending their money in such grand company. Among many other letters she wrote her the following:—

"To Mrs. Bragwell.

"You can't imagine, dear mother, how charmingly we live—I lie a-bed almost all day, and am up all night; but it is never dark for all that, for we burn such numbers of candles all at once, that the sun would be of no use at all in London.—Then I am so happy! for we are never quiet a moment, Sundays or working-days; nay, I should not know which was which, only that we have most pleasure on a Sunday, because it is the only day in which people have nothing to do but divert themselves. Then the great folks are all so kind, and so good, they have not a bit of pride, for they will come and eat and drink, and win my money just as if I was their equals; and if I have got but a cold, they are so very unhappy that they send to know how I do, and though I suppose they can't rest till the footman has

told them, yet they are so polite, that if I have been dying they seem to have forgot it next time we meet, and not to know but they have seen me the day before. Oh! they are true friends; and for ever smiling, and so fond of one another, that they like to meet and enjoy one another's company by hundreds, and always think the more the merrier.

"Your dutiful daughter,

"BETSEY SQUEEZE."

The style of her letters, however, altered in a few months. She owned that things went on gayer and grander than ever, yet she hardly ever saw her husband, except her house was full of company, and cards, or dancing was going on; that he was often so busy he could not come home all night; that he always borrowed the money her mother sent her when he was going out on this nightly business; and that the last time she had asked *him* for money, he cursed, and swore, and bid her apply to the old farmer and his rib, who were made of money. This letter Mrs. Bragwell concealed from her husband.

At length, on some change in public affairs, Mr. Squeeze, who had made an overcharge of some thousand pounds in one article, lost his contract; he was found to owe a large debt to government, and his accounts must be made up immediately. This was impossible; he had not only spent his large income without making any provision for his family, but had contracted heavy debts by gaming and other vices. His creditors poured in upon him. He wrote to Bragwell to borrow another sum; but without hinting at the loss of his contract. These repeated demands made Bragwell so uneasy, that instead of sending him the money, he resolved to go himself secretly to London, and judge by his own eyes how things were going on, as his mind strangely misgave him. He got to Mr. Squeeze's house about eleven at night, and knocked gently, concluding that they must needs be gone to bed. But what was his astonishment to find the hall was full of men; he pushed through in spite of them, though to his great surprise they insisted on knowing his name. This affronted him; he refused, saying, I am not ashamed of my name, it will pass for thousands in any market in the West of England. Is this your London manners, not to let a man of my credit in without knowing his name indeed! What was his amazement

to see every room as full of card-tables, and of fine gentlemen and ladies as it would hold; all was so light, and so gay, and so festive, and so grand, that he reproached himself for his suspicions, thought nothing too good for them, and resolved secretly to give Squeeze another five hundred pounds to help to keep up so much grandeur and happiness. At length, seeing a footman he knew, he asked him where were his master and mistress, for he could not pick them out among the company; or rather his ideas were so confused with the splendor of the scene, that he did not know whether they were there or not. The man said that his master had just sent for his lady up stairs, and he believed that he was not well. Mr. Bragwell said he would go up himself, and look for his daughter, as he could not speak so freely to her before all that company. He went up and knocked at the chamber door, and its not being opened, made him push it with some violence. He heard a bustling noise within, and again made a fruitless attempt to open the door. At this the noise increased, and Mr. Bragwell was struck to the heart at the sound of a pistol from within. He now kicked so violently against the door that it burst open, when the first sight he saw was his daughter falling to the ground in a fit, and Mr. Squeeze dying by a shot from a pistol which was dropping out of his hand. Mr. Bragwell was not the only person whom the sound of the pistol had alarmed. The servants, the company, all heard it, and all ran up to this scene of horror. Those who had the best of the game took care to bring up their tricks in their hands, having had the prudence to leave the very few who could be trusted, to watch the stakes, while those who had a prospect of losing, profited by the confusion and threw up their cards. All was dismay and terror. Some ran for a surgeon, others examined the dying man, while some removed Mrs. Squeeze to her bed, while poor Bragwell could neither see nor hear, nor do any thing. One of the company took up a letter which lay open upon the table, addressed to him, they read it, hoping it might explain the horrid mystery. It was as follows:

"To Mr. Bragwell.

"Sir,

"Fetch home your daughter, I have ruined her, myself, and the child, to which she every hour expects to be a mother.

I have lost my contract. My debts are immense. You refuse me money: I must die then; but I will die like a man of spirit. They wait to take me to prison; I have two executions in my house; but I have ten card-tables in it. I would die as I have lived. I invited all this company, and have drank hard since dinner to get primed for the dreadful deed. My wife refuses to write to you for another thousand, and she must take the consequences. *Vanity* has been my ruin. It has caused all my crimes. Whoever is resolved to live beyond his income is liable to every sin. He can never say to himself, thus far shall thou go and no farther. Vanity led me to commit acts of rapine, that I might live in splendor; vanity makes me commit self-murder because I will not live in poverty. The new philosophy says, that death is an eternal sleep; but the new philosophy lies. Do you take heed: it is too late for me. The dreadful gulph yawns to swallow me—I plunge into perdition. There is no repentance in the grave, no hope in hell.

Your's,

"DASHALL SQUEEZE."

The dead body was removed, and Mr. Bragwell remaining almost without speech, or motion, the company began to think of retiring, much out of humour at having their party so disagreeably broken up; they comforted themselves, however, that as it were *so early*, for it was now scarcely twelve, they could finish their evening at another party or two; so completely do habits of *pleasure*, as it is called, harden the heart, and steel it not only against virtuous impressions, but against natural feelings. Now it was, that those who had nightly rioted at the expence of those wretched people were the first to abuse them. Not an offer of assistance was made to this poor forlorn woman; not a word of kindness, or of pity, nothing but censure was now heard. Why must those upstarts ape people of quality? though as long as these upstarts could feast them, their vulgarity, and their bad character had never been produced against them. "As long as thou dost well unto thyself, men shall speak good of thee." One guest who, unluckily, had no other house to go to, coolly said, as he walked off—Squeeze might as well have put off shooting himself till the morning. It was monstrous provoking that he could not wait an hour or two.

As every thing in the house was seized, Mr. Bragwell prevailed on his miserable daughter, weak as she was, next morning to set out with him for the country. His acquaintance with polite life was short, but he had seen a great deal in a little time. They had a slow and a sad journey. In about a week, Mrs. Squeeze lay-in of a dead child, she herself languished a few days and then died; and the afflicted parents saw the two darling objects of their ambition, for whose sakes they had made *too much haste to be rich*, carried to the land where all things are forgotten. Mrs. Bragwell's grief, like her other passions, was extravagant; and poor Bragwell's sorrow was rendered so bitter by self-reproach, that he would quite have sunk under it, had he not thought of his old expedient in distress, that of sending for Mr. Worthy to comfort him. It was Mr. Worthy's way, to warn people of those misfortunes which he saw their faults must needs bring on them, but not to reproach, or desert them when the misfortunes came. He had never been near Bragwell during the short, but flourishing, reign of the Squeeze's; for he knew that prosperity made the ears deaf, and the heart hard to good counsel; but as soon as he heard his friend was in trouble he set out to go to him. Bragwell burst into a violent fit of tears when he saw him, and when he could speak, said, This trial is more than I can bear. Mr. Worthy kindly took him by the hand, and when he was a little composed, said, I will tell you a short story. There was in ancient times a famous man who was a slave. His master, who was very good to him, one day gave him a bitter melon, and bade him eat it; he eat it up without one word of complaint. How was it possible, said the master, for you to eat so very nauseous and disagreeable a fruit? The slave replied, My good master, I have received so many favours from your bounty, that it is no wonder if I should once in my life eat one bitter melon from your hands. This generous answer so struck the master, that the history, says he, gave him his liberty. With such submissive sentiments, my friend, should man receive his portion of sufferings from God, from whom he receives so many blessings. You in particular have received much good at the hand of God, shall you not receive evil also?

O, Mr. Worthy, said Bragwell, this blow is too heavy for me, I cannot survive this shock. I do not desire it, I only desire to die.—We are very apt to talk most of dying when we are least fit for it, said Worthy. This is not the language of that submission which makes us prepare for death, but of that despair which makes us out of humour with life. O, Mr. Bragwell, you are indeed disappointed of the grand ends which made life so delightful to you; but till your heart is humbled, till you are brought to a serious conviction of sin, till you are brought to see what is the true end of life, you can have no hope in death. You think you have no business on earth, because those for whose sake you too eagerly heaped up riches are no more. But is there not under the canopy of heaven some afflicted being whom you may yet relieve, some modest merit which you may bring forward, some helpless creature you may save by your advice, some perishing christian you may sustain by your wealth? When you have no sins of your own to repent of, no mercies of God to be thankful for, no miseries of others to relieve, then, and not till then, I consent you should sink down in despair, and call on death to relieve you.

Mr. Worthy attended his afflicted friend to the funeral of his unhappy daughter and her babe. The solemn service, the committing his late gay and beautiful daughter to darkness, to worms, and to corruption, the sight of the dead infant, for whose sake he had resumed all his schemes of vanity and covetousness, when he thought he had got the better of them, the melancholy conviction that all human prosperity ends in, *in ashes to ashes and dust to dust*, had brought down Mr. Bragwell's self-sufficient and haughty soul into something of that humble frame in which Mr. Worthy had wished to see it. As soon as they returned home he was beginning to seize the favourable moment for fixing these serious impressions, when they were unseasonably interrupted by the parish officer, who came to ask Mr. Bragwell what he was to do with a poor dying woman who was travelling the country with her child, and was taken in a fit under the church-yard wall? At first they thought she was dead, said the man, but finding she still breathed, they have carried her into the work-house till she could give some account of herself. Mr. Bragwell was impatient at the interruption, which was indeed

unseasonable, and told the man he was at that time too much overcome by sorrow to attend to business, but he would give him an answer to-morrow. But my friend, said Mr. Worthy, the poor woman may die to-night; your mind is indeed not in a frame for worldly business, but there is no sorrow too great to forbid our attending the calls of duty. An act of christian charity will not disturb but improve the seriousness of your spirit, and though you cannot dry your own tears, God may, in great mercy, permit you to dry those of another. This may be one of those occasions for which I told you life was worth keeping. Do let us see this woman. Bragwell was not in a state either to consent or refuse, and his friend drew him to the workhouse, about the door of which stood a crowd of people. She is not dead, said one, she moves her head. But she wants air, said they all, while they all, according to custom, pushed so close upon her that it was impossible she should get any. A fine boy of two or three years old stood by her, crying, Mammy is dead, mammy is starved. Mr. Worthy made up to the poor woman, holding his friend by the arm: in order to give her air he untied a large black bonnet which hid her face, when Mr. Bragwell, at that moment casting his eyes on her, saw in this poor stranger the face of his own run-away daughter Mrs. Incle. He groaned, but could not speak, and as he was turning away to conceal his anguish, the little boy fondly caught hold of his hand, lisping out—O stay, and give mammy some bread. His heart yearned towards the child, he grasped his little hand in his, while he sorrowfully said to Mr. Worthy, It is too much, send away the people. It is my dear naughty child, *my punishment is greater than I can bear.* Mr. Worthy desired the people to go and leave the stranger to them; but by this time she was no stranger to any of them. Pale and meagre as was her face, and poor and shabby as was her dress, the proud and flaunting Miss Polly Bragwell was easily known by every one present. They went away, but with the mean revenge of little minds, they paid themselves by abuse, for all the airs and insolence they had once endured from her. Pride must have a fall, said one. I remember when she was too good to speak to a poor body, said another; where are her flounces and her furbelows now? It has come home to her at last. Her child looks as if he would be glad of the worst bit she formerly denied us.

In the mean time Mr. Bragwell had sunk in an old wicker chair which stood behind, and groaned out, Lord forgive my hard heart! Lord subdue my proud heart, "create a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." This was perhaps the first word of genuine prayer he had ever offered up in his whole life. Worthy overheard it, and his heart rejoiced, but this was not a time for talking, but doing. He asked Bragwell what was to be done with the unfortunate woman, who now seemed to recover fast, but she did not see them, for they were behind. She embraced her boy, and faintly said, my child what shall we do? *I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, father I have sinned against heaven and before thee.* This was a joyful sound to Mr. Worthy, who began to hope that her heart might be as much changed for the better as her circumstances were altered for the worse, and he valued the goods of fortune so little, and contrition of soul so much, that he began to think the change on the whole might be a happy one. The boy then sprung from his mother and ran to Bragwell, saying, Do be good to mammy. Mrs. Incle looking round, now perceived her father; she fell at his feet, saying, O forgive your guilty child, and save your innocent one from starving. Bragwell sunk down by her, and prayed God to forgive both her and himself in terms of genuine sorrow. To hear words of real penitence and heart-felt prayer from this once high-minded father and vain daughter, was music to Worthy's ears, who thought this moment of outward misery was the only joyful one he had ever spent in the Bragwell family. He was resolved not to interfere, but to let the father's own feelings work out the way in which he was to act. Bragwell said nothing, but slowly led to his own house, holding the little boy by the hand, and pointing to Worthy to assist the feeble steps of his daughter, who once more entered her father's doors; but the dread of seeing her mother quite overpowered her. Mrs. Bragwell's heart was not changed, but sorrow had weakened her powers of resistance, and she rather suffered her daughter to come in, than gave her a kind reception. She was more astonished than pleased; and, even in this trying moment, was more disgusted with the little boy's mean cloaths, than delighted with his rosy face. As soon as she was a little re-

covered, Mr. Bragwell desired his daughter to tell him how she happened to be at that place just at that time.

In a weak voice she began: My tale, Sir, is short but mournful.——

PART VII.

I LEFT your house, my dear father, said Mrs. Incle, with a heart full of vain triumph. I had no doubt but my husband was a great man who had put on that disguise to obtain my hand. Judge then what I felt to find that he was a needy impostor, who wanted my money but did not care for me. This discovery, though it mortified, did not humble me. I had neither affection to bear with the man who had deceived me, nor religion to improve by the disappointment. I have found that change of circumstances does not change the heart, till God is pleased to do it. My misfortunes only taught me to rebel more against him. I thought God unjust; I accused my father, I was envious of my sister, I hated my husband; but never once did I blame myself. My husband picked up a wretched subsistence by joining himself to any low scheme of idle pleasure that was going on. He would follow a mountebank, carry a dice-box, or fiddle at a fair. He was always taunting me for that gentility on which I so much valued myself. If I had married a poor working girl, said he, she could now have got her bread; but a fine lady without money, is a burthen to her husband, and a plague to society. Every trial which affection might have made lighter, we doubled by animosity; at length my husband was detected in using false dice; he fought with his accuser, both were seized by a press-gang, and sent to sea. I was now left to the wide world, and miserable as I had thought myself before, I soon found that there were higher degrees of misery. I was near my time, without bread for myself, or hope for my child. I set out on foot in search of the village where I had heard my husband say his friends lived. It was a severe trial to my proud heart to stoop to those low

people, but hunger is not delicate, and I was near perishing. My husband's parents received me kindly, saying, that though they had nothing but what they earned by their labour, yet I was welcome to share their hard fate, for they trusted that God who sent mouths would send meat also. They gave me a small room in their cottage, and many necessaries, which they denied themselves.

O, my child, interrupted Bragwell, every word cuts me to the heart,. These poor people gladly gave thee of their little, while thy rich parents left thee to starve. .

How shall I own, continued Mrs. Incle, that all this goodness could not soften my heart, for God had not yet touched it. I received all their kindness as a favour done to them. When my father brought me home any little dainty which he could pick up, and my mother kindly dressed it for me, I would not condescend to eat it with them, but devoured it sullenly in my little garret alone, suffering them to fetch and carry every thing I wanted. As my haughty behaviour was not likely to gain their affection, it was plain they did not love me; and as I had no notion that there were any other motives to good actions but fondness, or self-interest, I was puzzled to know what made them so kind to me, for of the powerful and constraining law of christian charity I was quite ignorant. To cheat the weary hours, I looked about for some books, and found, among a few others of the same cast, *Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.* But all those books were addressed to *sinners;* now as I knew I was not a sinner, I threw them away in disgust. Indeed they were ill suited to a taste formed by novels, to which reading I chiefly trace my ruin, for, vain as I was, I should never have been guilty of so wild a step as to run away, had not my heart been tainted, and my imagination inflamed, by those pernicious books.

At length my little George was born. This added to the burthen I had brought on this poor family, but it did not diminish their kindness, and we continued to share their scanty fare without any upbraiding on their part, or any gratitude on mine. Even this poor baby did not soften my heart; I wept over him indeed day and night, but they were tears of despair; I was always idle, and wasted those hours in sinful murmurs at his fate, which I should have employed in trying

to maintain him. Hardship, grief, and impatience, at length, brought on a fever. Death seemed now at hand, and I felt a gloomy satisfaction in the thought of being rid of my miseries, to which I fear was added, a sullen joy to think that you, Sir, and my mother, would be plagued to hear of my death when it would be too late; and in this your grief, I anticipated a gloomy sort of revenge. But it pleased my merciful God not to let me thus perish in my sins. My poor mother-in-law sent for a good clergyman, who pointed out to me the danger of dying in that hard and unconverted state so forcibly, that I shuddered to find on what a dreadful precipice I stood. He prayed with me, and for me, so earnestly, that at length God, who is sometimes pleased to magnify his own glory in awakening those who are dead in trespasses and sins, was pleased, of his free grace, to open my blind eyes, and soften my stony heart. I saw myself a sinner, and prayed to be delivered from the wrath of God, in comparison of which the poverty and disgrace I now suffered appeared as nothing. To a soul convinced of sin, the news of a Redeemer was a joyful sound. Instead of reproaching Providence, or blaming my parents, or abusing my husband, I now learnt to condemn myself, to adore that God, who had not cut me off in my ignorance, to pray for pardon for the past, and grace for the time to come. I now desired to submit to penury and hunger in this world, so that I might but live in the fear of God here, and enjoy his favour in the world to come. I now learnt to compare my present light sufferings, the consequence of my own sin, with those bitter sufferings of my Saviour which he endured for my sake, and I was ashamed of murmuring. But self-ignorance, conceit, and vanity, were so rooted in me, that my progress was very gradual, and I had the sorrow to feel, how much the power of long bad habits keeps down the growth of religion in the heart, even after it has begun to take root. I was so ignorant of divine things, that I hardly knew words to frame a prayer; but when I got acquainted with the Psalms, I there learnt how to pour out the fulness of my heart, while in the gospel I rejoiced to see what great things God had done for my soul.

I now took down once more from the shelf *Doddridge's Rise and Progress*, and, Oh! with what new eyes did I read it! I now saw clearly, that not only the thief, and the

drunkard, the murderer, and the adulterer, are sinners, for that I knew before; but I found that the unbeliever, the selfish, the proud, the worldly-minded, all, in short, who live without God in the world, are sinners. I did not now apply the reproofs I met with, to my husband, or my father, or other people as I used to do, but brought them home to myself. In this book I traced, with strong emotions, and close self-application, the sinner through all his course; his first awakening, his convictions, repentance, joys, sorrows, backsliding, and recovery, despondency, and delight, to a triumphant death-bed; and God was pleased to make it a chief instrument in bringing me to himself. Here it is, continued Mrs. Incle, untying her little bundle, and taking out a book, accept it, my dear father, and I will pray that God may bless it to you as He has done to me.

When I was able to come down, I passed my time with these good old people, and soon won their affection. I was surprised to find they had very good sense, which I never had thought poor people could have; but, indeed, worldly persons do not know how much religion, while it mends the heart, enlightens the understanding also. I now regretted the evenings I had wasted in my solitary garret, when I might have passed them in reading the bible with these good folks. This was their refreshing cordial after a weary day, which sweetened the pains of want and age. I one day expressed my surprize that my unfortunate husband, the son of such pious parents, should have turned out so ill: the poor old man said with tears, I fear we have been guilty of the sin of Eli; our love was of the wrong sort. Alas! like him, *we honoured our son more than God*, and God has smitten us for it. We shewed him what was right, but through a false indulgence, we did not correct him for what was wrong. We were blind to his faults. He was a handsome boy, with sprightly parts; we took too much delight in those outward things. He soon got above our management, and became vain, idle, and extravagant, and when we sought to restrain him, it was then too late. We humbled ourselves before God; but he was pleased to make our sin become its own punishment. Timothy grew worse and worse; till he was forced to abscond for a misdemeanor; after which we never saw him, but have heard of him changing from one idle way of life to another, *unstable*

as water: he has been a footman, a soldier, a shopman, and a strolling actor. With deep sorrow we trace back his vices to our ungoverned fondness; that lively and sharp wit, by which he has been able to carry on such a variety of wild schemes, might, if we had used him to reproof in his youth, have enabled him to have done great service for God and his country. But our flattery made him wise in his own conceit; and there is more hope of a fool than of him. We indulged our own vanity, and have destroyed his soul.

Here Mr. Worthy stopped Mrs. Incle, saying, that whenever he heard it lamented, that the children of pious parents often turned out so ill, he could not help thinking that there must be frequently something of this sort of error in the bringing them up: he knew, indeed, some instances to the contrary, in which the best means had failed; but he believed, that from Eli the priest, to Incle the labourer, more than half the failures of this sort might be traced to some mistake, or vanity, or bad judgment, or sinful indulgence in the parents.

I now looked about, continued Mrs. Incle, in order to see in what way I could assist my poor mother, regretting more heartily than she did, that I knew no one thing that was of any use. I was so desirous of humbling myself before God and her, that I offered even to try to wash.—You wash! exclaimed Bragwell, starting up with great emotion, Heaven forbid that with such a fortune and education, Miss Bragwell should be seen at a washing-tub. This vain father, who could bear to hear of her distresses and her sins, could not bear to hear of her washing. Mr. Worthy stopped him, saying, As to her fortune, you know, you refused to give her any; and, as to her education, you see it had not taught her to do any thing better. I am sorry you do not see, in this instance, the beauty of christian humility. For my own part, I set a greater value on such an active proof of it, than on a whole volume of professions. Mr. Bragwell did not quite understand this, and Mrs. Incle went on. What to do to get a penny I knew not. Making of fillagree, or fringe, or card-purses, or cutting out paper, or dancing and singing, was of no use in our village. The shopkeeper, indeed, would have taken me, if I had known any thing of accounts; and the clergyman could have got me a nursery-maid's place, if I could have done plain-work. I made some awkward attempts to learn to spin

and knit, when my mother's wheel or knitting lay by, but I spoilt both through my ignorance. At last I luckily thought upon the fine netting I used to make for my trimmings, and it struck me that I might turn this to some little account. I procured some twine, and worked early and late to make nets for fishermen, and cabbage-nets. I was so pleased that I had at last found an opportunity to shew my good-will by this mean work, that I regretted my little George was not big enough to contribute his share to our support by travelling about to sell my nets.

Cabbage-nets! exclaimed Bragwell; there is no bearing this.—Cabbage-nets! My grandson hawk cabbage-nets! How could you think of such a scandalous thing?—Sir, said Mrs. Incle mildly, I am now convinced that nothing is scandalous which is not wicked. Besides, we were in want; and necessity, as well as piety, would have reconciled me to this mean trade. Mr. Bragwell groaned, and bade her go on.

In the mean time, my little George grew a fine boy; and I adored the goodness of God, who, in the sweetness of maternal love, had given me a reward for many sufferings. Instead of indulging a gloomy distrust about the fate of this child, I now resigned him to the will of God. Instead of lamenting, because he was not likely to be rich, I was resolved to bring him up with such notions as might make him contented to be poor. I thought if I could subdue all vanity and selfishness in him, I should make him a happier man than if I had thousands to bestow on him; and I trusted, that I should be rewarded for every painful act of present self-denial, by the future virtue and happiness of my child. Can you believe it, my dear father, my days now past not unhappily? I worked hard all day, and that alone is a source of happiness beyond what the idle can guess. After my child was asleep at night, I read a chapter in the bible to my parents, whose eyes now began to fail them. We then thanked God over our frugal supper of potatoes, and talked over the holy men of old, the saints, and the martyrs, who would have thought our homely fare a luxury. We compared our peace, and liberty, and safety, with their bonds, and imprisonment, and tortures; and should have been ashamed of a murmur. We then joined in prayer, in which my absent parents and my husband were

never forgotten, and went to rest in charity with the whole world, and at peace in our own souls.

Oh! my forgiving child! interrupted Mr. Bragwell, sobbing, and didst thou really pray for thy unnatural father, and lie down in rest and peace? Then, let me tell thee, thou wast better off than thy mother and I were.—But no more of this; go on.

Whether my father-in-law had worked beyond his strength, in order to support me and my child, I know not, but he was taken dangerously ill. While he lay in this state, we received an account that my husband was dead in the West-Indies of the yellow fever, which has carried off such numbers of our countrymen; we all wept together, and prayed that his awful death might quicken us in preparing for our own. This shock, joined to the fatigue of nursing her sick husband, soon brought my poor mother to death's door. I nursed them both, and felt a satisfaction in giving them all I had to bestow, my attendance, my tears, and my prayers. I, who was once so nice and so proud, so disdainful in the midst of plenty, and so impatient under the smallest inconvenience, was now enabled to glorify God by my activity and my submission. Though the sorrows of my heart were enlarged, I cast my buthen on him who cares for the weary and heavy laden. After having watched by these poor people the whole night, I sat down to breakfast on my dry crust and coarse dish of tea, without a murmur; my greatest grief was, lest I should bring away the infection to my dear boy. I prayed to know what it it was my duty to do between my dying parents, and my helpless child. To take care of the sick and aged, seemed to be my duty. So I offered up my child to him who is the father of the fatherless, and he spared him to me.

The chearful piety with which these good people breathed their last, proved to me, that the temper of mind with which the pious poor commonly meet death, is the grand compensation made them by Providence for all the hardships of their inferior condition. If they have had few joys and comforts in life already, and have still fewer hopes in store, is not all fully made up to them by their being enabled to leave this world with stronger desires of heaven, and without those bitter regrets after the good things of this life, which add to the dying tortures of the worldly rich? To the forlorn and

destitute death is not terrible, as it is to him *who sits at ease in his possessions*, and who fears that night his soul shall be required of him.

Mr. Bragwell felt this remark more deeply than his daughter meant he should. He wept and bade her proceed.

I followed my departed parents to the same grave, and wept over them, but not as one who had no hope. They had neither houses nor lands to leave me, but they left me their bible, their blessing, and their example, of which I humbly trust I shall feel the benefits when all the riches of this world shall have an end. Their few effects, consisting of some poor household goods, and some working tools, hardly sufficed to pay their funeral expences. I was soon attacked with the same fever, and saw myself, as I thought, dying the second time; my danger was the same, but my views were changed. I now saw eternity in a more awful light than I had done before, when I wickedly thought death might be gloomily called upon as a refuge from every common trouble. Though I had still reason to be humbled on account of my sin, yet, through the grace of God, I saw death stripped of his sting, and robbed of his terrors, *through him who loved me, and had given himself for me;* and in the extremity of pain, *my soul rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

I recovered, however, and was chiefly supported by the kind clergyman's charity. When I felt myself nourished and cheered by a little tea or broth, which he daily sent me from his own slender provision, my heart smote me, to think how I had daily sat down at home to a plentiful dinner, without any sense of thankfulness for my own abundance, or without enquiring whether my poor sick neighbours were starving; and I sorrowfully remembered, that what my poor sister and I used to waste through daintiness, would now have comfortably fed myself and child. Believe me, my dear mother, a labouring man, who has been brought low by a fever, might often be restored to his work some weeks sooner, if on his recovery he was nourished and strengthened by a good bit from a farmer's table. Less than is often thrown to a favourite spaniel would suffice, so that the expence would be almost nothing to the giver, while to the receiver it would bring health, and strength, and comfort.

By the time I was tolerably recovered, I was forced to leave the house. I had no human prospect of subsistence. I humbly asked of God to direct my steps, and to give me entire obedience to his will. I then cast my eyes mournfully on my child, and though prayer had relieved my heart of a load which without it would have been intolerable; my tears flowed fast, while I cried out in the bitterness of my soul, *How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger.* This text appeared a kind of answer to my prayer, and gave me courage to make one more attempt to soften you in my favour. I resolved to set out directly to find you, to confess my disobedience, and to beg a scanty pittance, with which I and my child might be meanly supported in some distant country, where we should not disgrace our more happy relations. We set out and travelled as fast as my weak health and poor George's little feet and ragged shoes would permit. I brought a little bundle of such work and necessaries as I had left, by selling which we subsisted on the road.—I hope, interrupted Bragwell, there were no cabbage-nets in it?—At least, said her mother, I hope you did not sell them near home.—No; I had none left, said Mrs. Incle, or I should have done it. I got many a lift in a waggon for my child and my bundle, which was a great relief to me. And here I cannot help saying, I wish drivers would not be too hard in their demands, if they help a poor sick traveller on a mile or two; it proves a great relief to weary bodies and naked feet; and such little cheap charities may be considered as *the cup of cold water*, which, if given on right grounds, *shall not lose its reward*. Here Bragwell sighed, to think that when mounted on his fine bay mare, or driving his neat chaise, it had never once crossed his mind that the poor way-worn foot traveller was not equally at his ease, or that shoes were a necessary accommodation. Those who want nothing are apt to forget how many there are who want every thing.—Mrs. Incle went on: I got to this village about seven this evening, and while I sat on the church-yard wall to rest and meditate how I should make myself known at home, I saw a funeral; I enquired whose it was, and learnt it was my sister's. This was too much for me. I sunk down in a fit, and knew nothing

that happened to me from that moment, till I found myself in the workhouse with my father and Mr. Worthy.

Here Mrs. Incle stopped. Grief, shame, pride, and remorse, had quite overcome Mr. Bragwell. He wept like a child; and said, he hoped his daughter would pray for him, for that he was not in a condition to pray for himself, though he found nothing else could give him any comfort. His deep dejection brought on a fit of sickness: O! said he, I now begin to feel an expression in the sacrament which I used to repeat without thinking it had any meaning, the *remembrance of my sins is grievous, the burthen of them is intolerable.* O, it is awful to think what a sinner a man may be, and yet retain a decent character! How many thousands are in my condition, taking to themselves all the credit of their prosperity, instead of giving God the glory! Heaping up riches to their hurt, instead of dealing their bread to the hungry. O, let those who hear of the Bragwell family, never say that *vanity is a little sin.* In *me* it has been the fruitful parent of a thousand sins, selfishness, hardness of heart, forgetfulness of God. In one of my sons vanity was the cause of rapine, injustice, extravagance, ruin, self-murder. Both my daughters were undone by vanity, though it only wore the more harmless shape of dress, idleness, and dissipation. The husband of my daughter Incle it destroyed, by leading him to live above his station, and to despise labour. Vanity ensnared the souls even of his pious parents; for while it led them to wish to see their son in a better condition, it led them to allow him such indulgences as were unfit for his own. O, you who hear of us, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; resist high thoughts; let every imagination be brought into obedience to the Son of God. If you set a value on finery, look into that grave; behold the mouldering body of my Betsy, who now says to *Corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.* Look at the bloody and brainless head of her husband. O, Mr. Worthy, how does Providence mock at human foresight! I have been greedy of gain, that the son of Mr. Squeeze might be a great man; he is dead; while the child of Timothy Incle, whom I had doomed to beggary, will be my heir. Mr. Worthy, to you I commit this boy's education. Teach him to value his immortal soul more, and the good things of this life less, than

I have done. Bring him up in the fear of God and in the government of his passions. Teach him that unbelief and pride are at the root of all sin. I have found this to my cost. I trusted in my riches; I said to-morrow shall be as this day and more abundant. I did not remember that *for all these things God would bring me to judgment.* I am not sure that I believed in a judgment.

Bragwell at length grew better, but he never recovered his spirits. The conduct of Mrs. Incle through life was that of an humble Christian. She sold all her sister's finery, which her father had given her, and gave the money to the poor, saying, it did not become one who professed penitence, to return to the gaieties of life. Mr. Bragwell did not oppose this; not that he had fully acquired a just notion of the self-denying spirit of religion, but having a head not very clear at making distinctions, he was never able, after the sight of Squeeze's mangled body, to think of gaiety and grandeur, without thinking at the same time, of a pistol and bloody brains; for, as his first introduction into gay life had presented him with all these objects at one view, he never afterwards could separate them in his mind. He even kept his fine beaufet of plate always shut, because it brought to his mind the grand unpaid-for sideboard that he had seen laid out for Mr. Squeeze's supper, to the remembrance of which he could not help tacking debts, prisons, executions, and self-murder.

Mr. Bragwell's heart had been so buried in the love of the world, and evil habits were become so rooted in him, that the progress he made in religion was very slow; yet he earnestly prayed and struggled against vanity; and when his unfeeling wife declared she could not love the boy unless he was called by their name instead of Incle; Mr. Bragwell would never consent, saying, he stood in need of every help against pride. He also got the letter which Squeeze wrote just before he shot himself framed and glazed; this he hung up in his chamber, and made it a rule to go and read it as often as he found his heart disposed to VANITY.

Z.

FINIS.